Educational Policies and School Management in Portugal: Processes of Conservative Modernisation (1998-2002)

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ABSTRACT

The educational agenda of recent decades has been characterised by ongoing attempts to "restructure" and "deregulate" state schooling. This process has, however, been highly controversial, with major divergences of interpretation in almost all the aspects pertaining to the reform in school governance: its goals, principles, foundations, outcomes and "effective" level of internationalisation.

The current research aims to contribute towards a clarification of certain aspects of this debate and, in particular, of issues relating to:

- The impact of reform on organisational structures and practices.
- The influence of neo-managerial perspectives in societies, which differ considerably from the more developed countries. Indeed, Portugal has been defined as a semi -peripheral country, with very specific approaches to the development of the Welfare State and mass schooling.

The investigation describes and analyses the organisational, professional, social, cultural and political transformations taking place in Portuguese primary schools during the period 1998-2002. This period corresponds to that of the defining and implementing of a new system of "school autonomy, administration and management" (Law nº115-A/1998), which establishes extremely diverse areas of potential autonomy for schools (in the strategic, curricular, organisational, pedagogic, financial and cultural domains) and extends the possibility of participation of parents in school governance.

The study, which draws on ethnographic methods , took place in six primary schools in the Lisbon area. The fieldwork was conducted in two main phases: the period prior (1998-1999) and subsequent to the implementation of the new model of school management (1999-2002).

The analysis took into consideration the main issues and controversies to which the reform in school governance has given raise in contemporary literature: emergence of new models for social regulation (market, neo-managerialism, performativity); changes in professional and organisational patterns (collegiality, school culture, leadership); new relations between the school and the community (consumer power, "privatisation")

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

List of Figures

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INTRODUCTION

Research Goals

The study **"Educational Policies and School Management in Portugal: Processes of Conservative Modernisation (1998-2002)"** has two main goals.
In the first place it aims to describe and analyse the main policies and practices that have shaped the governance and management of Portuguese primary education in recent decades. It attempts, in a very particular way, to identify the organisational, professional, social, cultural and political transformations experienced in Portuguese primary schools during the period 1998-2002. This period corresponds to that of the defining and implementing of a new system of "school autonomy, administration and management" (Dec- Law nº115-A/1998), which establishes extremely diverse areas of potential autonomy for schools (in the strategic, curricular, organisational, pedagogic, financial and cultural domains) and extends the possibility of participation of parents in school governance.
The institutionalisation of this system heralds a change in the bureaucratic and centralist structure of Portuguese school administration and suggests the existence of a "paradigmatic convergence" in relation to the devolution policies that, since the mid-eighties, have dominated the educational agenda of many western countries and international organisations (OCDE, World Bank). The analysis will therefore take into consideration the main issues and controversies which the reform in school governance has raised in recent decades: emergence of new models for social regulation (market, neo-managerialism, performativity); changes in professional and organisational patterns ("new professionalism" , school culture), "transformational" leadership); new relations between the school and the community (consumer power, contracting out and

privatisation of services); globalisation, "globalisation" or "localisation" of educational policies.

Secondly, although on a different scale of priorities, the research attempts to help put an end to the oblivion to which Southern European countries, especially those with a more recent democratic tradition (Portugal, Greece, Spain), have been consigned in the field of school administration. Indeed, present trends in the sphere of school management emerged from a set of political orientations that were most forcefully expressed in the developed, English-speaking countries: neo-managerialism, marketisation of education, new systems of accountability (Apple 1986; Slee *et al*, 1998; Broadfoot, 2000; Smyth et al 2000; Gewirtz, 2002). However, the reform of school governance now constitutes a world trend (Karlsteng, 1997; Lima, 2001; Arnott & Raab 2000). For this reason, there needs to be a diversification of research contexts. Only in this way can an evaluation be made of the degree to which state education systems have converged in recent years. As we shall see, the Southern European countries, especially Portugal, constitute a particularly suitable backdrop against which to plot the new "geography" of similarity (ies) and difference(s) in the sphere of educational governance and regulation.

Context and Relevance of the Study

Internationally, the governance and management of state schools underwent important changes in the 1980s and 1990 (Arnott & Raab, 2000). This reform process, currently referred to as "decentralisation", "devolution" or "School Based Management (SBM)", has been viewed by international agencies and diverse national governments as an essential prerequisite for greater organisational effectiveness and improvement in standards of education (see Chapter 1). However, the centrality of this issue, in contemporary educational policies, does not prevent devolution from continuing to be an extremely controversial issue, with major divergences in almost all respects concerning the reform in school governance: its goals, principles, foundations, outcomes

and level of internationalisation (see Chapter 1). Indeed, the new models of school management are highly prescriptive and normative, over-compensating in political rhetoric ("open society", "free market", "consumer sovereignty", "knowledge-based societies") for what they lack in theoretical and empirical foundation.

The very arguments used to legitimise the "devolution" process, as shown by Weiler (1999) in respect of the *distribution of the authority, efficacy and culture of learning,* are wide open to formal contradiction: a broader and more diffuse division of authority almost always multiplies levels and sources of control; efficacy depends on the relation established between loss of "scale economies" and "improvements" achieved in the use of resources; (local) learning cultures are hampered by the existence of a global market that demands relatively uniform competence, skills and qualifications (see also Chapter 1).

Furthermore, the futuristic scenarios designed by neo-managerial concepts are somewhat overdrawn and unconvincing. They remind us of Green's critique to some versions of gobalisation: "it can sometimes be strikingly parochial (first-worldist), naïvely historical and crudely reductionist (Green, 1999, p55).

It therefore becomes imperative to carry out studies that look outside the new legislative directives and the rationale behind them; studies which, while not ignoring changes in the nature of high modernity societies (Giddens, 1997), throw light upon the way in which educational policies are appropriated or recontextualised by local actors (teachers, parents, school managers, local and central administration). The current research therefore focuses on an analysis of the impact of school based management on organisational structures and practices, that is, the identification of the "first order" effects of the reforms (Ball, 1994, p25; see also Chapter 2). Attention to the praxiological dimension is particularly important in semi-peripheral countries [1] , of which Portugal is one, given their marked divisions between political orientations and social relations and practices (Santos, 1990).

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[1] See definition in pp51-52

> The discrepancy between legal frameworks and social practices is universal, and only becomes a salient feature when it reaches a particularly high level, as is the case nowadays in Portugal (Santos, 1990).

It is not, however, solely in its research into the "context of practice" that this study can contribute to the critical analysis of the normative and universalist claims upheld by the neo-managerial concepts.

Portugal also has various structural features that in them pose a challenge to the way in which the issue of devolution has been presented and legitimised by the prevailing managerial concepts. Firstly, being a semi-peripheral country Portugal constitutes a context in which it is virtually impossible to circumvent the centrality of the State. The latter plays a central role in regulating the economy and arbitrating social conflicts unparalleled in the developed countries (see chapter one , section four). It is therefore difficult to see how the Portuguese State can transfer, as required by neo-managerialist concepts, a major part of its functions to a "civil society" and a "private initiative" that draw so heavily on the support of that same State (Estevão, 1995).

Secondly, in spite of the Portuguese educational system being characterised by a tradition of educational centralisation which goes back more than two centuries, this centralisation has failed to produce typical bureaucratic patterns: there is a marked discrepancy between formal dispositions and practice (Fernandes, 1995; Lima, 1998, 2001). In this respect, bureaucracy cannot be said to constitute a major impediment to innovation. Further, the hypercritical position adopted by neo-liberal and neo-managerialist perspectives towards the role of the state and state bureaucracy in economic development would seem to be unsuited to semi-peripheral societies and developing countries. In fact, in terms of the theory of dependence, what has frequently been stressed is the role of the "state bourgeoisie", in league with local and international elites, in the growth dynamics of semi-peripheral countries (Evans, 1986; Santos *et al*, 2001).

Third, Portugal shares the special tradition of "welfare state" that characterises Southern European countries (e.g. clientism, misappropriation of funds allocated for social security, liaison between public and private entities in the field of social assistance) [2] . Portugal would indeed seem to be a particularly glaring example when it comes to the absence of effective state commitment to safeguarding the social and economic rights of its citizens. Some authors have expressed the view, both for this reason and by the very nature of the development of social security structures, that one cannot truly speak of a Welfare State in Portugal (Santos *et al,* 2001). It would therefore seem particularly relevant to investigate the repercussions in this kind of context of phenomena such as the "crisis of the State ", the "crises of Welfare state", the "limitations of bureaucratic models" " the empowerment" of local actors", all of which have been thoroughly discussed in the specialist literature.

Indeed, current directives in the educational sphere, akin to what had already been taking place in the Portuguese health system, would seem to suggest the existence of post-welfarism without welfare (or at least with extremely limited forms of welfare). It therefore seems relevant to attempt to look for explanations for educational restructuring, including the restructuring of school management and governance, that transcend the schematic criticism of bureau-professionalism and welfarism that characterize new managerial discourses (see Chapter 1). Of particular value in this domain were studies referring to the issue of the crisis in the "legitimisation of the State"; to the emergence of new models of educational regulation; to the change in patterns of production and consumption and, in a general sense, to the issue of "conservative modernization" [3] (Dale, 1990; Popkewitz, 1991, 1999; Gewirtz *et al, 1995;* Menter *et al,* 1997; Whitty *et al,* 1998; Heiler, 1999; Sarmento *et al,* 1999; Smyth, 1999; Gewirtz, 2000, 2002).

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[2] see Ferrara, 1995

[3] freing individuals for economic purposes while controlling them for social purposes (Dale, 1990).

The Research Process: Structure and Strategies of Inquiry

Methodological options, as Bourdieu pointed out, "are inseparable from the most theoretical options for object definition" (Bourdieu, 1989, p29). Since it would be virtually impossible to describe Portuguese primary schools, on a social, cultural and political basis, without having recourse to observation "of the everyday routines that make organisational life" (Schwartzman, 1993, p38), this research draws on ethnographic methods ,techniques and procedures .

Field work was carried out in six primary schools of the Lisbon area, of different size, location and social composition of population. The duration of the empirical research was approximately three years, and fell mainly within the period between January 1999 and March 2002 (see Methodology).

The research process included two main phases. In the first part of the research, prior to the implementation of the new management model, I was mainly concerned with achieving two objectives. First, I was anxious to gather data that would subsequently enable me to assess the process of transformation associated with the transition from "*democratic management*" to "*school autonomy*" (the designations for the old and the new management model in Portugal; see Chapter 1). My second aim was to analyse the organisational and professional implications of the political about-turn in Portugal in the late eighties, in terms of a certain "debureaucratisation" and "decentralisation" of the education system.

In the second phase of the research, I tried to identify the transformations taking place in Portuguese primary schools, on the cultural, organisational, pedagogic and political levels, as a result of a more entrenched orientation towards the predominant managerial paradigms, which expressed itself in the adoption of a new regime of "autonomy, administration and management of Portuguese schools" (Decree-Law N° 115-A/98).

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation has three main parts (see Table 1). The first part is dedicated to the theoretical and historical foundation of the study. The second part is based upon the research findings obtained during the first phase of field work and reform and corresponding to the period prior to the new management model but in which certain moderate forms of neo-managerialism could already be detected (see Chapter 1). The third part of the dissertation is devoted to a description and analysis of the transformations taking place in Portuguese primary schools, in the political, organisational and cultural domains, as a result of the implementation of the new regime of school autonomy (decree-Law nº 115-A/98).

Table 1 - Structure of dissertation

PART I

THE RESEARCH PROCESS:
THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CO-ORDINATES

CHAPTER ONE
SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW

The reform of school administration and governance is one of the most important aspects of contemporary educational policies. In this chapter I intend to contribute towards the analysis of this phenomenon, which has wide-ranging implications for the political and cultural restructuring of schools. This analysis will consist of four main parts. Firstly , I shall attempt to define the concept of "school based management" (SBM), which constitutes the cornerstone of the present research. Secondly, I shall turn to an analysis of the "policy context" within which new forms of educational regulation have emerged in many parts of the world. Thirdly, I shall attempt to summarise the main principles of SBM and the various critiques to which it has been subject. Finally, there will be a description of the Portuguese position in the domain of school administration, in an attempt to identify areas of continuity and discontinuity in relation to the scenarios previously analysed.

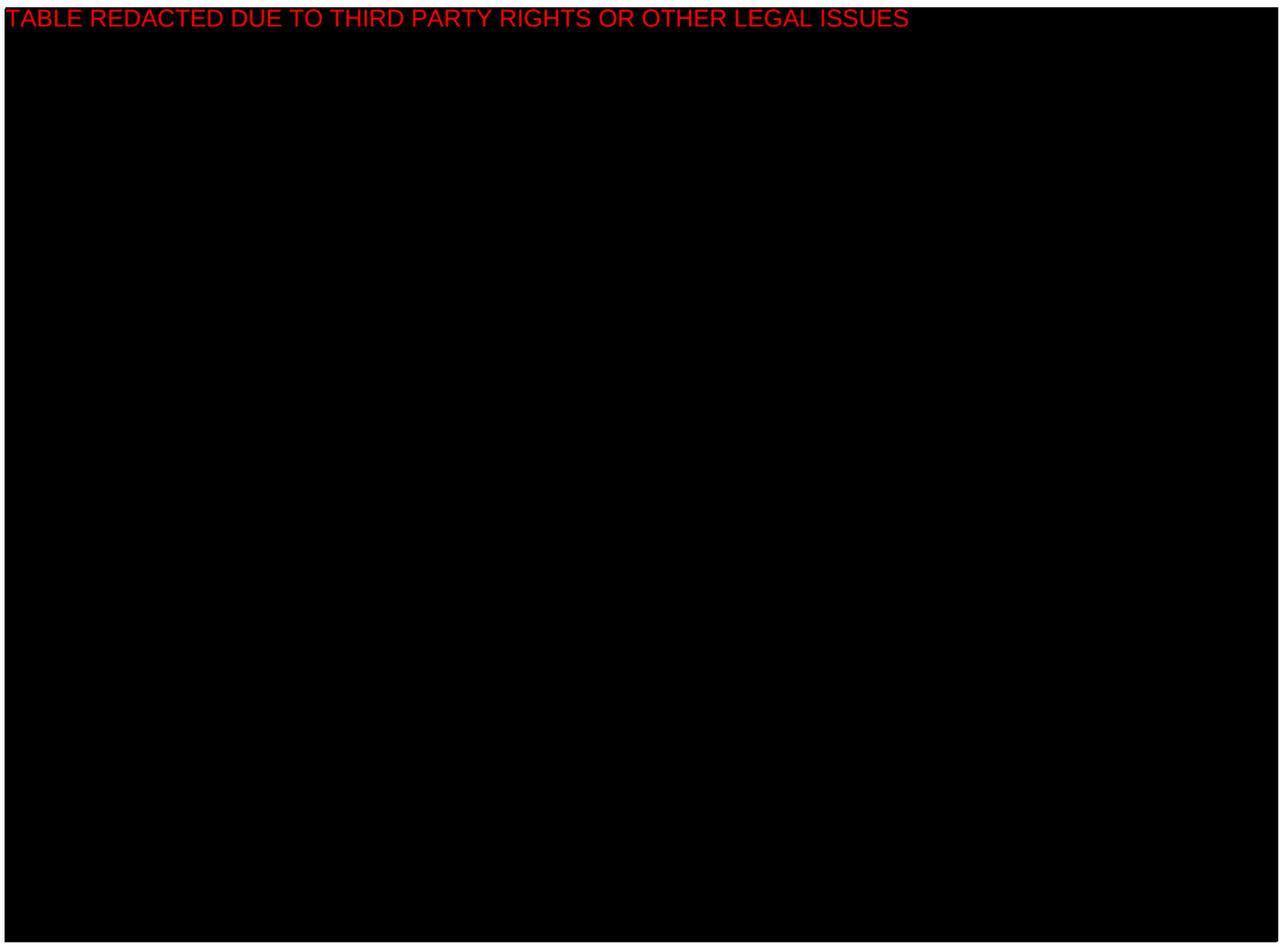
School Based Management: a Definition

The administration and management of schools has, as has already been said, been the target of a thoroughgoing process of restructuring. This process, in particular evidence in English-speaking countries, has been variously designated: school-based management (SBM), devolution, school autonomy, delegation, deregulation, parental choice, local management of schools.

This proliferation of designations arises not only from the wide variety of contexts in which changes in school governance have taken place, but also gives some indication of the complexity of the phenomena in question. In fact, the

term "decentralization" has been applied to profoundly contradictory political perspectives: liberalism, federalism, local populism and participatory democracy (Lauglo, 1996). It may therefore serve to disguise widely differentiated models of policy-making and educational regulation (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Implications of Different Forms of Decentralisation



(Adapted from Lauglo, 1996, p40)

In addition, the widespread use of the term "decentralisation" to describe the current process of reform of school management obscures the fact that this also includes:

- movements for concentration of decision -making (supranational bodies, central definition of goals, standardized testing)
- an important redefinition of power relations between local actors (parents, teachers and local authorities)

- new forms of state discipline and surveillance (business and performance oriented culture, audit systems).

In these circumstances, it is a misconception to see the reforms of school management and governance as simply a strategy for de-regulation (Ball, 2001) They are new processes of control, "controlled de -control" (Du Gay, 1996), that operate according to the combined dictates of the market, managerialism and performitivity (Ball, 1999;2001).

Even the more clear-cut designations, apparently easier to circumscribe and specify, are in fact clearly multifaceted. Kenway & Epstein (1996) showed, for example, how the term "choice" can be used to encompass a combination of different types of process:

> *devolution* (passing management responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, "down the line"), *deregulation* (getting rid of lot of the "restrictive" rules), *dezoning* (pupils are "free" to move between schools) and *desegregation* (replacing collectivity, collegiality, co-operation with competitive individualism) (Kenway & Epstein, 1996, p301).

Similar concerns could be raised with respect to the use of other concepts (c.f. Whitty *et al*, 1998). The use of the term "school autonomy", for example, which constitutes the main political and academic reference in Portugal for the reform of school administration, carries with it such a strong connotation of self-government that is far from corresponding to the dominant educational policies of the eighties and nineties:

> A self-managing school is not an autonomous school (...) it is not intended that authority be decentralised for its own sake (...) The attachment of responsibility and accountability to the concept implies that this authority is concerned with determining the particular ways in which the school goes about its affairs in addressing the goals, policies, the standards and accountabilities that have been *centrally determined for all schools* (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998, p5, my emphasis).

That is why, whenever I use this expression with reference to the Portuguese situation, it will be according to Whitty's definition.

> School autonomy, as used here, refers to school self - management through some or all aspects of funding and decision-making being devolved (...) to individual schools whether to site -based professionals, community-based councils or a particular combination of these (Whitty, 2002, p47).

The complexity of the issues under discussion makes it extremely hard to find a designation that is free of ambiguity and limitations (see also Kenway & Epstein, 1996; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Sarmento, 1999). Moreover, the systematic use of different terminology, while theoretically more appropriate, raises considerable problems of a practical nature with regard to the drafting and understanding of this dissertation. Therefore, except where it might jeopardize the analytical process, the expression "school based management" (SMB) will be used when referring to the restructuring of school management under way in various countries. The choice of designation was made with two essential factors in mind:

- SBM is one of the expressions most widely used internationally to designate the phenomenon under analysis (Levacic, 1995; Whitty *et al*, 1998);
- The characteristics of school administration in Portugal, which are typified by a delicate balance between the centralist tradition and some experience of management at school level [1].

Bearing in mind that even the designation "school based management" is not entirely free of ambiguity (Whitty, 1998), it should be explained that in this research it refers to three aspects of policy which are interconnected but which may assume different degrees of relevance:

- transference of responsibilities to schools, which may include a variety of different kinds of resources (e.g. financial, curricular, human);
- existence of a centrally defined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998);

[1] see the last section of this chapter

- institutionalisation of mechanisms for local participation in the running of schools (including the wielding of influence as, for example, in the choice of school).

By considering these three aspects simultaneously, we can distinguish SBM from the other types of school management with which it is frequently associated: educational decentralization and school self -government.

This definition also makes it clear that SBM is a form of school management based on an autonomy that is merely *relative.* It is an administrative rather than political process, with decisions at school level being made within a framework of local, state or national policies and guidelines. Indeed, this is the view unequivocally adopted by SBM supporters:

> School site or school based management (...) are all approaches to the management of public schools or systemic private schools wherein there is a significant and consistent decentralisation to the school level of authority to make decisions related with the allocation of resources, (...). *The school remains accountable to a central authority for the manner resources are allocated* (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, p303, emphasis added).

Indeed, despite the change in power relations taking place at local level (Gewirtz, 2002; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002), SBM presupposes the perpetuation of a considerable asymmetry in power and authority among the various levels of the administrative hierarchy. This hierarchical difference remains, even when school-based management models go beyond a narrow focus of finance to embrace greater institutional control over an appreciable share of the potential educational resources.

> [Resources] include: knowledge (decentralisation of decisions related to curriculum, including decisions related to the goals or ends of schooling); technology (decentralisation of decisions related to the means of teaching and learning); power (decentralisation of authority to make decisions); material (decentralisation of decisions related to the use of facilities, supplies and equipment); people (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of people in matters related with teaching and learning); time (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of

time); and finance (decentralisation of decisions relating to the allocation of money) (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992).

Having clarified the main designation used in this research, it is now time to analyse the origins of SBM.

The Background to the Emergence of SBM

A considerable amount of contemporary sociological and organisational literature tends to justify the emergence of SBM with arguments of a technical, technological or scientific nature: modernisation and flexibilization of school structures; rational and systematic planning; precision and efficiency in the decision-making process (information, speed, participation); proximity to the entrepreneurial style of management model (initiative, efficiency, leadership, innovation). These arguments, however convincing they may appear, are far from constituting an adequate interpretation of the factors underlying the restructuring of school administration. They tend to present SBM as an essentially technical issue, whereas what lies at the root of the redefinition of school governance are important problems of a social and political order.

Crisis within the State, Globalisation and "New Economy"

The advocacy of models of school-based management (SBM) forms part of a wider movement to restructure public services. Various authors attribute this to the "crisis of the State", which became apparent in the closing decades of the twentieth century. This feeling of crisis was described by Waters (1995) as follows: "states appeared unable to make economies grow, unable to offer transparency and value for money in the exercise of power, and unable to ensure a certain future for their populations" (Waters, 1995, p160). In the educational sphere, the problems of the governability of the State were to manifest themselves specifically in an inability to deal with growing social diversity, widespread dissatisfaction with the output of the education system

and failure to keep up with the pace of cultural, economic and technological change (Barber, 1996).

The problems of legitimating the State have been defined according to two essential parameters: the impact of globalisation on the Keynesian model of development, and the inadequacy of bureaucratic structures to solve the problems of "high modernity" societies (Giddens, 1997).

In relation to the impact of globalisation, it has been argued that contemporary societies are based on a global flow of goods, services, finance, people, signs and ideas unprecedented at any other time in history. This scenario has placed a variety of constraints on State intervention:

- difficulty in maintaining clearly-defined national frontiers, given the growth of world trading blocks, the internationalization of labour markets and the increased mobility of finances and production (Hobsbawn, 1994, Kenway *et al* 2000; Lingard & Rivzi, 2001);
- the need to give priority to the foreign competitiveness of the economy, as opposed to regulating market excesses (Blackmore, 1999);
- the absence of legal instruments to exercise effective fiscal control over the activities of ever more powerful economic agents (Latham, 1998)

Alongside these changes, there has emerged an increased scepticism as to the capacity of the State to give continuity to social policies of an inclusive nature, designed to make viable a more equitable and more participatory society. These policies had been gradually developed throughout the twentieth century, particularly during the post-war period, and corresponded to an acknowledgement of the social rights of workers (employment, health, education, social security, housing). They were greatly fuelled by the Keynesian dream of bringing into peaceful coexistence the interests of the economy, the State ("apparatus") and the citizen:

> [State intervention] helped to balance supply and demand without the violent cyclical swings characteristic of competitive markets (...) it promoted economies of scale through nationalization or merger policies, encouraged Fordist mass consumption through its housing and transport policies, and generalised norms of mass consumption through intervention

> in labour markets and collective bargaining and through its provision for collective consumption (Jessop, 1996, p255).

This was achieved through the development of complex and comprehensive welfare structures - health care, support for children and the elderly, sponsorship of cultural, recreational and sporting activities - significant changes to existing structures. In the field of education, for example, it produced major innovations: expansion of compulsory schooling, implementation of comprehensive education, increased support to children with special needs and learning difficulties, community education, school medical services and school meals.

However, this caring and progressive state did not play a purely "beneficent" role. Indeed, battalions of highly-trained experts, created by the Welfare State, played an important role as guardians of normality (Rivenem & Rinne, 2000). In exchange for this normality, the "caring state" offered its citizens "a normal employment", a "life-time occupation", "owner occupier housing", and the "nuclear family" (Rivinem & Rinne, 2000). Through the "full recognition of social rights and the high level of transferences involved, these policies eventually transformed the political nature of relations between the State and civil society" (Santos *et al*, 2001, p85).

The subsequent destabilisation of the economic foundations of the Keynesian State (based upon mass production, low price energy) and the development of globalisation led to the emergence of a new political and economic agenda in the neo-liberal mould, which was highly critical of the political foundation and economic viability of the Welfare State [2].

Under the influence of neo-liberal perspectives and the constraints imposed by the process of globalisation, the role of the nation State has, to a greater or lesser extent, according to variations in different settings, been modified and limited and become more "competitive", in two senses of the word: firstly by cutting down its running costs; secondly in giving primacy to the economic dimensions of its activity. This process of the adaptation of the state would give rise to a

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[2] see, for instance, the World Bank report, "Averting the Old Age Crisis", 1994.

certain convergence of national policies in various situations, of which SBM would be one example, with certain common key features. "These are: fiscal discipline, public expenditure priorities, tax reform, financial liberalization, exchange rates, trade liberalization, foreign direct investment, privatization, *deregulation*, and property rights" (Dale, 1999, p4, my emphasis).

The logical outcome of these policy priorities was increasing pressure to cut back and privatise services provided by the State, the quest for alternatives to direct public provision (contracting out, partnerships), the gradual opening up of the public sector to the dictates of the market (competition, cost reduction) and, more recently, direct private sector participation in the delivery of state services. In the educational domain, this situation created a climate favourable to the acceptance of a "new orthodoxy" (Carter & O'Neill, 1995, Ball, 1998) built upon a limited set of basic principles:

(1) Improving national economics by tightening the connection between schooling, employment, productivity and trade;
(2) Enhancing student outcomes in employment-related skills and competences;
(3) Attaining more direct control over curriculum content and assessment;
(4) Reducing the costs to government of education
(5) Increasing community input to education by more direct involvement in school decision making and pressure of market choice.

(Ball, 1998a, p12)

This new orthodoxy also included a trenchant critique of those traditional forms of organisation - professional, bureaucratic and Fordist - which were considered ill-suited to the demands of complexity and change in the modern world (Clark & Newman, 1997; Gewirtz, 2002). Bureaucratic structures came in for the heaviest criticism, from neo-liberal and neo-managerial perspectives, as being costly, undemocratic and open to corporatism, as well as being the inflexible generators of resistance to change and innovation. This new policy commonsense is disseminated through multi-lateral organisations which are highly powerful and prestigious politically. "For example, an OCDE (1995:7) study of public sector reforms observed that old style bureaucratic structures

which were "highly centralised, rule-bound, and inflexible" and "which emphasised process rather than results" inhibited efficiency and effectiveness and were not able to respond rapidly enough to the demands of change" (Taylor *et al*, 1997, p79).

The logical consequence of this type of diagnosis, when taken as a whole, was that the public sector had no alternative but to accommodate directly (choice, competition, market) or indirectly to the methods of the private sector ("new public management"). The pressure for change is particularly noticeable in the field of education, where the emergence of different types of school based management (SBM) has become such a widespread phenomenon that some authors consider it to be a "universal trend" (Karlsten, 2000). In the next section I shall therefore critically describe and analyse the basic principles behind SBM.

SBM - Principles and Consequences

In their famous trilogy on self-managing schools, Caldwell and Spinks (1988, 1992, 1998) developed one of the most detailed and elaborate conceptualisations of SBM. The perspectives of these authors attracted, moreover, considerable attention in the professional world (Ball, 1994; Whitty, 2002). I shall therefore take this trilogy as my main point of reference when describing and analysing SBM.

School Autonomy (a "simultaneous loose-tight system")

In colloquial and political parlance, SBM is often considered to be a form of educational decentralization. Caldwell and Spinks (1992, 1998) argue that this idea is clearly wide of the mark, given that the central authorities, even in the SBM model, continue to wield considerable authority on questions of policy, as noted earlier:

> centrally determined frameworks of goals, policies, priorities, curriculum, standards and accountabilities *will be strengthened* (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998, p215, my emphasis).

The "freedom" of schools is therefore exercised within a framework that fails to add up to a significant redistribution of power between the central authorities and the school organisations. As previously mentioned, educational decentralization and school autonomy are, in the opinion of these authors, of an administrative rather than a political nature. In other words, they advocate the freedom of means but stop short at the (local) definition of educational aims and priorities. There is a strong family resemblance between the new school management models (SBM) and the managerial practices advocated by private sector management gurus. Indeed, Peters and Waterman (1982) had already considered "simultaneous loose-tight properties" to be one of the basic features of "excellent management practice". That is, flexibility of means but control of aims and results.

The division of responsibilities "between the central administration and the schools", as proposed by Caldwell and Spinks (1998) renders somewhat paradoxical the thesis of "empowerment" of local actors to which these authors subscribe. Indeed, "administrative" decentralization does not apply to the main areas of policy-making; and the new management model, as we shall see further on, is based on procedures which open the way to tighter control (e.g. school plans, audit). In this sense, SBM models run largely counter to the concept of autonomy with which they are so often associated.

> Autonomy means, unlike heteronomy, that the grouping order is not imposed by anyone from the outside, but by members of the group itself, by virtue of this very attribute, whatever form it may take (Weber, 1922, quoted in Sarmento, 1998, p19).

This view of autonomy is in direct contrast with the way in which SBM supporters see relations between schools and the central administration: the schools will not define their grouping order internally, but rather institutionalise a higher injunction ("a centrally defined framework of goals, standards and accountabilities"). Indeed, the prevailing notion of autonomy in

neo-managerial concepts is so narrow that it can even be restricted to the area of self-discipline:

> *autonomy is a product of discipline.* The discipline (a few shared values) provides the framework. It gives people confidence (to experiment, for instance) stemming from stable expectations about what really counts (...) Thus a set of shared values and rules about discipline, details and execution can provide the framework in which practical autonomy takes place routinely (Peters & Waterman, 1995, p322, my emphasis).

The "innovative" feature of neo-managerial concepts of autonomy does not lie, however , in their limited and allegedly "apolitical" nature (submission to organisational values and objectives). It lies essentially in the increased dependence of the school which the new concepts would seem to prescribe. In fact, the substance of the relationship between the educational and the social systems may be conceptualised according to two analytical dimensions: the structural context and the functional context.

> In the structural context, autonomy may be seen to refer to a type of relationship in which significant proprieties or internal relations of one system cannot be empirically derived from corresponding features within another system (...) In the functional context, autonomy may be conceptualised in the following manner. A social system may be regarded as functionally autonomous insofar as its significant social consequences, internally and externally, are not adjusted to the reproduction of another system (Fritzell, 1987, p25).

Traditionally, there was no clear-cut structural relationship between the educational and the economic domains. The more prestigious schools and levels of education were not, as a rule, based on the same type of categories and reasoning as those which characterise the economic universe (technical and instrumental). This did not invalidate the fundamental role played by education in the reproduction of social relations.

> Academic diplomas, exams and competitive selection processes, like the aristocratic titles of earlier societies, justify social divisions and differential access to positions of power. What they do not necessarily represent is a nucleus of essential skills and knowledge essential to the *technical* performance of a

> particular job. This is why social differentiation may depend, to a great extent, on a "mere" act of initial *nomination*, a famous university or a polytechnic (Bourdieu, 1997, p23).

The new concepts of school autonomy, on the other hand, set out to change the State's formal independence of the economy. The old adage that "capitalist economy is structured according to the commodity form, while the state in capitalist society is basically not" (Fritzell, 1987, p26) starts to lose credibility in a universe in which the dominant managerial concepts advocate precisely that state schooling should, wherever possible, adopt a "commodity form" and a "commodity logic" (OCDE, 1995, Caldwell and Spinks, 1994).

> National and global considerations will become increasingly important, especially with respect to curriculum and an *education system that is responsive to* national needs within *a global economy* (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992 p7).

Again, in this respect, it may be argued that the new organisational concepts represent, despite the wider legal responsibilities of schools, an attempt to increase their functional and structural dependence, rather than their autonomy.

This is why some authors have suggested the emergence of a "new correspondence" between the social relations of the educational system and those of production (Whitty, 2002). This correspondence, according to some authors, might indeed be stronger than the one identified by Bowles and Gintis between mass schooling and the system of mass production (Hickox and Moore, 1992)

These perspectives are reinforced by the importance given by SBM supporters to neo-managerialist concepts and the market in the reform of administration and public services.

Debureaucratization: neo-managerialism and the (re)discovery of the market

Bureaucracy as a means of organisational coordination emerged as an alternative to *traditional* and *charismatic* forms of authority (Weber, 1922), which proved to be wide open to nepotism, patronage and corruption (Clark & Newman, 1997). This "libertarian" dimension of bureaucracy has not been given much attention by SBM supporters, who prefer to concentrate on other negative aspects (corporatism, sluggishness, ossification) and to show up its inadequacies in respect of the "post-modern" condition (fragmentation, uncertainty, provisionality).

Successive governments, in different parts of the world, have included "debureaucratization" on their agendas, through a process that has taken a variety of forms (e.g. deregulation, contractualization, privatization). They have steadily increased their efforts, and mobilized important political and academic support. At the present time, there would seem to be two prevailing trends in this field: advocacy of neo-managerialist concepts and increased harnessing of regulation procedures inspired in the market model (Clark & Newman, 1997; Gewirtz *et al*, 1995). I will move on to look at each of these trends in a little more detail.

Neo-managerialism

Neo-managerialism and "new public management" are often interpreted as an academic discourse designed to legitimise and universalise management procedures characteristic of the private sector. However, this perspective is not limited to support of the application of traditional forms of regulation of the private sector to new social domains (administration and public services, cultural and scientific institutions). In fact, the penetration of neo-managerialism in the private sector is also a recent phenomenon. Neo or corporate managerialism appeared in the late 1970s and 1980s in the context of

processes of economic restructuring that took a variety of forms: "the de-unionisation and the loss of collective bargaining rights; "greening", the feminisation and casualisation of labour in search of cost reduction, and the greater mobility of the enterprise in national and international terms" (Clark and Newman, 1997, pp56 -57).

The new perspective is based upon an interconnected set of principles:

- *"Freedom to manage "*

Managerialism has at its centre the idea that managers should have the freedom to make decisions about the procedures used to achieve desired outcomes (Clark & Newman, 1997). The establishment of the "right to manage" does not restrict itself, however, to transforming power relations between the various organisational actors (bureaucrats, executives and professionals). Concomitantly the State should, by "devolving authority" and "providing flexibility"[3], remove unnecessary constraints to organisational decision-making: policies should favour direct and indirect exposure to market forces (marketing, contracting out, partnerships); incentives should be structured around outputs; resources constraints should force institutions to pursue "efficiency" and cultural shifts should encourage a wider adoption of "economic calculation".

- *Definition of an organisational focus*

The remaking of the public sector generally implies a narrowing in the definition of services. Indeed, from a neo-managerial viewpoint, the choice of a "core business" or "organisational focus" has clear advantages: it strengthens organisational cohesion; legitimates the withdrawal from previously undertaken activities; introduces differentiations among the workforce (core and contingent staff, external contractors); encourages service fragmentation between providers, and allows the development of forms of quasi-market competitiveness.

The idea of defining a "core business" or "organisational focus" underlies many current educational directives: to define a school "mission", to build a school "culture", to develop a school "project" (see Obin & Cros, 1991; Macedo, 1995;

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[3] OCDE,1992

Harris *et al*, 1997). However, this orientation also encourages a "mutual surveillance" (Troman, 2002) and a "struggle over visibility" among schools (Ball, 2001) which can favour the dissemination of a market ethic (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995). Moreover, the definition of an organisational focus runs counter to the exercise of the complex, diversified and multiple functions assigned to contemporary educational systems [4]. Functional specialization, which stems from the choice of a particular organisational focus, poses special problems in the realm of educational equality of opportunity. Differentiation between organisations may also produce a potential differentiation in the publics and customers who procure their services (see Bourdieu, 1982, 1997, Slee *et al*, 1997; Reay & Lucey, 2000; Reay, 2001). This trend may be irrelevant in certain segments of the market; it does, however, go against the very *raison d'être* of state schooling.

- *Ownership and self-regulation*

The restructuring of public services goes beyond aspects of a purely organisational nature. It has profound implications for the ethical and professional profiles of "welfare workers" (Cribb *et al*, 1998). Indeed, organisations run along "quasi-business" lines require a specific type of worker: enterprising, instrumental, and self-regulating individuals (Popkewitz, 1999; Smyth, 1999; Gewirtz, 2001). Under the influence of neo-managerialism, individuals are encouraged to live an existence of calculation: to "add value" to themselves; to review and compare performances; to manage careers; to take responsibility for results; to be attentive to new incentives, constraints and opportunities.

> The creation of a sense of ownership - of missions and targets, budgets and responsibility for results - has been one of the most sought-after effects of the managerial revolution, constructing commitment and motivation among staff in the pursuit of corporate objectives (...) Nevertheless, there is a conception of ownership which is a less discussed effect of such initiatives:

[4] Grácio *et al*, 1992

> ownership as proprietorialism or possessive individualism (Clark & Newman, 1997, p79).

We are therefore witnessing an attempt to colonise the professional terrain of welfare workers (Clark and Newman, 1997, Cribb *et al*, 1998).

The pressure to produce "self-regulating" individuals does not, however, exclude the use of more traditional forms of discipline and surveillance (audit systems, performance-related pay, insecurity over contracts). Indeed, neo-managerialism is not a unitary meta-narrative (see Ball, 1994; Clark and Newman, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Whitty, 2002).

There are, however, certain basic ideas common to the different contributing narratives: the importance of the market; the reinforcement of leaders' and consumers' roles; "new" economic imperatives (efficacy, efficiency, excellence and innovation); audit and accountability.

These are the facets I shall be reflecting upon in the next section.

Regulation Through The Market

The "crisis of the State" in the seventies and eighties produced a trend in many western societies towards market provision (marketisation) and especially towards an almost universal acceptance of the rationale and "modus operandi" of market systems: competition between institutions, privileging the consumer, enhancing effectiveness, continual redefinition of products, and images and symbols associated with the particular line of business (Hartley, 1999; Lyon, 1999). This amounted to a deconstruction of the "public monopoly of education" (see Ball, 1994, p104), and to the parallel emergence of forms of marketisation of education:

> it is instructive that the private schools (...) tend to develop precisely the sorts of organisational characteristics reformers want the public schools to have (Chubb and Moe, 1997, pp378 - 379, my emphasis).

> the key to school improvement is not school reform, but institutional reform, a shift away from direct *democratic control* (Chubb and Moe 1997, p379, my emphasis).

In the most apologetic versions , the "market" solution seems to be imbued with magical powers: a kaleidoscope of multiple choices that would be the answer to everything whilst asking nothing in return. In a word, it would be sufficient to privatise, deregulate, contractualise and create private public partnerships for standards of quality in education to (magically) change. This position relies on a thorough taking on board of market ideology and associated theses:

- the belief that the pursuit of self-interest is a dominant feature of all human beings (individualism and economism);
- the presupposition that human reason is by nature progressive and that all human behaviour is endowed with personal and rational objectives (rationalism).

These qualities make it possible to associate the individual pursuit of self-interest with a future of social order and progress: development is the result of choices made by individual actors who, by virtue of that rationality with which they are endowed, seek to maximise their advantages and cut their costs.

Education, from the neo-liberal perspective, is no exception to this rule: it is in the interest of parents to choose the best school for their children; the institutionalisation of choice will, in its turn, make the quality of education a priority for managers and teachers (job survival); there will no longer be a demand for the "bad schools", and this, on the social level, will validate their restructuring or closing down. In a word, there will be both order and progress, simply as a result of "market discipline":

> The competitive process provides incentives and so evokes effort. It generates a continuous and universal search for substitutes, for ways of substituting the less desirable by the more desirable. The essence of the whole process is choice by the consumer; emulation, rivalry and substitution by the producer (Reekie, 1984 in Bowe *et al* 1992, p25).

However, the neo-liberal conviction that all goods - public or private - are best distributed by the market, is far from gaining universal acceptance (see Keep, 1992, Whitty *et al*, 1998, Lauder *et al*, 1999; Derouet, 2002). Indeed, neo-liberal concepts work on principles whose pertinence to the world of education, as to the other public services, has by no means been validated . Criticism has been focused on the following aspects:

- the belief in an "ideal consumer", rational and undifferentiated, with a perfect global vision of the market situation.

> pro-market theories tend to assume that parents have widespread knowledge of the various schools that they could send their children to (...) In contrast, Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz (1997) found that working class parents had no knowledge of the upper circuits available to them (Lauder and Hughes, 1999, p47).

- the assumption that all services and companies have a genuine interest in increasing their clientele.

However, in many cases, "organisational success" depends basically on client selection. This would seem, moreover, by virtue of the relationship between social background and school success, to be the case of education. Schools would therefore, in a market system, have additional reasons to increase the selection rather than the number of their clients.

- The identity of the logics of public services and private enterprises.

Even if the superiority of the market were undeniable, the very possibility of adapting the rules of the market to the running of public services remains a controversial issue: "in contrast to conventional markets, these organisations [schools, hospitals] are not out to maximize their profits; nor are they privately owned. Precisely what such enterprises maximize, or could be expected to maximize, is as unclear as their ownership structure (Le Grand, 1990, p5).

In spite of these critiques, the vast majority of the developed countries have adopted many of the principles of the market economy, especially those

concerning the redefining of relations between "producers" and "consumers" in their public service provision.

The Power of the Consumer

Consumerist theorists argue that there is an imbalance of power between those who provide goods and services, and those for whom they provide. The former possess all the advantages of corporate power and organisation (Potter, 1994; Clark and Newman, 1997). Adoption of the rules of the market implies, therefore, in the first place, subjecting public services to the primacy of the consumer or recreation of the surrogate consumer/producer relationship. The pursuit of this objective is not limited, however, from a neo-managerial perspective, to adopting traditional strategies of consumer participation or representation.

> The good news of the excellent companies is the extent to which, and the intensity with which, the customers intrude into every nook and cranny of the business - sales, manufacturing, research, accounting (Peter & Waterman, 1995, p157).

Therefore, the parents should be active consumers in the market place, "monitor and closely police what schools provide", "transmit appropriate forms of cultural capital" and "exploit the educational system to their children's best advantage" (Gewirtz, 2001, p367). This new model of "professional parenting" aims essentially at maximising the production of "human capital" (Vincent, 1996, 2000; Gewirtz, 2001). In this way, there emerges a model for school-family relations that has nothing whatever to do with the civic and political functions of the school.

In cases where more "advanced" market mechanisms are adopted - choice, vouchers - institutional participation and political influence become largely meaningless. Indeed, from a market perspective and from the point of view of the individual consumer, exit is an infinitely more "efficient" strategy than

voice. Why waste time making demands when you can simply change "brand" (school) or "supplier" [5]?

The supremacy of the consumer also helps, as we said above, to make the distinction between public and private largely meaningless: the organisational autonomy granted to schools makes it possible for local interests (particular) to prevail over public principles (general); mechanisms are put in place for "competition" or for interconnecting the public and the private sectors (voucher systems; contracting out of services); the incentive for school/company partnerships and, in a more general sense, the priority given to training for the "labour market", all make for a thorough cultural restructuring of the education system.

Political confidence in the "opening up to the community" and the merging of the frontiers between the public and private sectors is not surprising if we bear in mind the political benefits derived by the State from the institutionalisation of principles like choice of school, "institutional" participation and the creation of local educational partners (Heiler, 1999). Indeed, these directives favour a redefining of the relations between State and citizens in which the latter are essentially perceived as individual consumers or restricted decision-makers. The influence of these individual consumers or *"atomised"* and *"localised"* citizens is radically different from that which used to be exerted through parent/teacher associations: it may be contained within the limited sphere of each organisation and easily exercised within the framework of policies defined at a higher level. It can also be used to curb the professional autonomy of teachers who become exposed to more individualized and immediate pressure from the parents (Vincent & Tomlinson, 1997; Van Zanten, 2002).

In fact, although the "institutional freedom" won by the central administration in this process, as well as the advantages accrued in the political arena (participatory discourse, effects on state "legitimation" and accountability),

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[5] private schools, state schools, specialized schools, schools with a specific "ethnic", religious or political orientation

should not be underestimated, the main consequences associated with the institutionalisation of consumer power would seem to be of a social nature. Indeed, in spite of the purported neutrality and universality associated with the workings of the market, there is nothing natural, neutral or universal about the "marketisation" of education:

> The market form valorises certain types of cultural and social capital which are unevenly distributed across the population. The use of these capitals in choice-making and choice-getting enables certain social groups to maintain or change their position in the social structure (Ball & Vincent, 2000, p6).

Indeed, differences have been recorded between the middle and the working classes, both in the extent to which they exercise school choice (Van Zanten, 2002; Ball, 2003), and in the procedural sphere implied by the new system:

> To decode school systems and organisations, to discriminate between schools in terms of policies and practices, to engage with and question (and challenge if necessary) teachers and school managers, to critically evaluate teachers' responses and to collect, scan and interpret various sources of information (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p25).

This is why the marketisation of education should also be interpreted as part of a wider process of reorganisation of the relations between the different social groups at a time of great uncertainty for the middle classes (Ball & Vincent, 2000; Afonso, 2000). This uncertainty stems from the convergence of various factors: the end of the "monopoly" on access to higher education; loss of job security due to frequent professional and organisational restructuring; changes in contractual procedures (performance-related pay, fixed-term contracts, individual or organisational); increased competition in the market place (globalisation, joblessness of well-qualified professionals, new professional patterns).

In this "high risk" scenario it should come as no surprise that there may be a loss of support among the new middle class for efforts to democratise education and social policy: education is a "positional good" (Hirst, 1976). Differentiation

in the education system - generated by the various forms of SBM, the development of public-private ownership and the systems of choice - may be an important instrument in the renovation of middle class traditional advantages in the educational field.

Some authors are even of the opinion that contemporary educational policies are primarily aimed at satisfying the concerns and interests of the middle classes (Ball, 2003). Indeed, the process of social differentiation associated with the new administrative directives would seem to transcend political and national frontiers (Van Zanten & Ball, 1998; Lauder & Hughes, 1999; Thrupp, 2001; Van Zanten, 2002).

> The [New labour] government is implementing policies that are likely to solidify and exaggerate hierarchies of schooling. It has retained the per capita funding mechanism (...) It has retained the status differentials between types of school (...) [and expanded] the initiative which concentrates additional resources on schools designated as specialists and which allows these schools to select a proportion of their student body. As a consequence of these policies, the tendency towards polarisation between well-resourced, "high-performing" schools serving a mainly middle class clientele and poorly resourced "low-performing" schools serving a mainly working -class clientele is likely to continue (Gewirtz, 2001, p373).

The vision of the leader, at the service of a "business culture"

The success of schools in the market place implies a thorough overhauling of organisational priorities. The needs of the students, which used to be a basic feature of bureaucratic and professional ethical standards, now has to be weighed against the struggle for survival and the need to safeguard 'image' with which the new "autonomous" school organisations are confronted. The "new public management" will therefore have to take on a distinctly entrepreneurial dimension, assimilating basic aspects of an "entrepreneurial culture" (OCDE, 1995; Smyth, 1999).

The policies of devolved management, according to neo-managerial and neo-liberal interpretations of the concept, aim to confer on local actors "the tools and

the incentive to behave in more cost-effective, flexible, competitive, consumer-satisfying and innovative ways" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p90). The success of this "mission" depends to a great extent, from the perspectives under analysis, on the strategic "vision" of the organisational leaders and on the management procedures adopted by them (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Dunford *et al*, 2000). In summary, success in the market place presupposes the development of a new type of school leadership, key features of which will include responsiveness to the customer, the quest for a competitive edge over other local schools, financial management and the motivation and monitoring of "human resources" (see Chapter 4). This leadership, despite a marked symbolic and cultural connotation (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Dunford *et al*, 2000) will inevitably include distinctly "pragmatic" features (Moore, 2001). Indeed, acceptance of the rules of the market "creates pressures which drive management decision-making within schools, towards *commercial* and away from *educational and social* considerations, although these are not always mutually exclusive" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p90).

A market orientation clearly facilitates, moreover, an extension of the "right to manage" (Clark & Newman, 1997) and the "managerial prerogative" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995) with which they are associated. This extension derives in the first place from the key role played by head teachers in relation to families. The sanctioning of the principle of the primacy of the "customer" can thus only consolidate the institutional position of directors in the *internal* school hierarchy (the Portuguese situation is particularly telling in this context, as can be seen in Chapter 4). In addition, the present-day duties of a school leader, compared with the past, require skills not included in traditional modes of teacher training (commercial, financial and organisational). The chances of effective institutional participation on the part of professional educators are thus somewhat reduced. The very process of devolution implies transfer to the schools of a considerable number of daily management operations which teachers will be hard pressed to participate in, influence or control (see Bowe & Ball, 1992). In this sense, the school manager's freedom of movement is clearly

increased by the process of devolution (although there are also fresh restrictions imposed by the power of the consumer and the new forms of regulation of the central administration).

The "right to manage" is also strengthened by the prevailing cultural codes in the form of the emphasis laid on individual initiative (symbolized by the duties of leadership) and the achievement of results (irrespective of the means). The "maelstrom of change" (Formosinho & Ferreira, 1998) that permeates contemporary political discourse, combined with the unpredictability of a market-based organisational dynamic, also provides more than adequate justification for the disdain given to participatory organisational structures in the name of speed and the technical nature of decision-making. The new "representative" bodies in schools may well, in certain cases, serve more to ratify managerial initiatives than to make feasible a real definition of local educational policies. It would seem highly likely that "speed decision-making" would come to prevail over the empowerment of local actors.

> It is therefore possible to argue that the market may be facilitating an assertion of *"technical rationality"* in school management over and against *"substantive rationality"* (Considine, 1988). The emphasis of technical rationality is upon the development of techniques, procedures and organisational practices which are intended to facilitate speed decision-making, coordination, the setting and reviewing of objectives, good financial controls and information, cost improvement, responsiveness and consumer loyalty. The emphasis of substantive rationality is upon the intrinsic qualities of the "product-process" - here education, teaching and learning (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p92).

The Three "E"s: Efficacy, Efficiency and Excellence

Support of SBM presupposes that these management models represent a positive contribution to the efficacy and quality of education. The reasons given to justify this conviction are, as has already been mentioned, organisational and "economic": the *value added* by neo-managerialism and the rules of the market. There is also the conviction that the micro-systems, which devolution policies

seek to reproduce, have distinct advantages from the point of view of innovation: "the most discouraging fact of big companies is the loss of what got them big in the first place: innovation" (Peters & Waterman, 1995, p202).
Deployment of these concepts may vary in intensity from country to country (Whitty et al, 1998; Barroso, 2000; Maroy & Dupriez, 2000), but the quest for efficacy and quality is a recurring argument for the reform of school government. However, finding solid scientific grounds to support the new managerial concepts is no easy task. Even the supporters of SBM recognise that there is very little research evidence to support any direct relation between school achievement and the new forms of school government (see Caldwell & Spinks, 1998, p41). In addition, there is an extensive body of criticism of the movement for efficient schools (see Barroso, 1996; Slee et al, 1998; Dias, 1999; Morley & Rassol, 1999), which is one of the main sources of inspiration and validation for the SBM models.

In fact, research carried out in recent years, designed to assess the impact of SBM, has failed to come up with proof positive of the superiority of these models of organisation over and against those they have replaced (see Whitty *et al*, 1998; Lauder *et al* 1999; Gorard & Fitz, 1999) The empirical evidence, therefore, does not seem sufficient on its own to justify the marked swing towards SBM in contemporary societies. It seems reasonable, then, to seek alternative interpretations for this swing, for example in the requirements of the demands for "quality" and "audit" that have become ever-present references in current policy discourse.

The "auditing State" and the "terrors of performativity"

The use of auditing procedures for teaching practices and results is a traditional feature of education systems, though they may take different forms in different countries (Broadfoot, 2000). However, we have seen since the eighties an unprecedented extension of the domains of accountability (schools, training,

education policies) and of the methods and mechanisms used (self-scrutiny, internal assessment, independent assessment). Some authors even refer to the existence of a qualitatively novel situation in this respect, to which they have given the designation "auditing State" (Neave, 1998; Broadfoot, 2000; Maroy & Dupriez, 2000). The transition from a traditional system to an "auditing State" system includes the following phenomena: "the focusing of the central administration on strategic aspects of the system's development, by defining the aims and the quality criteria of the end product; the emergence of powerful intermediary bodies of specialists to operate as the direct agents of evaluation and coordination; and emphasis on the self-government of schools" (Afonso, 2001, p24).

The impact of the auditing state is clear from the increasing importance given to the mechanisms of *accountability* and *"self-governing schools"* in contemporary societies, transcending the cultural, institutional and political traditions of each country. There are even those who consider this to be the only common denominator in the various devolution experiments conducted in recent decades (Broadfoot, 2000; Afonso, 2001).

Meanwhile, the foundations for the creation and expansion of an auditing state are the object of controversy. To begin with, the defining of "uniform" standards of quality by the central administration runs counter to the tenor of contemporary policy discourse (autonomy, flexibility, creativity, and diversity). Secondly, it implies a return to positivist principles and favours "underestimation of the multireferentiality of evaluation procedures which has come to be seen as the answer to the crisis of traditional paradigms in this field" (Afonso, 2001, p23; see also Afonso, 1998; Fernandes, 1998; Broadfoot, 2000).

The impact of the new accountability policies would, in addition, seem to be having a destructive effect on the motivation of many pupils and teachers.

As far as the pupils are concerned, some authors speak of "learned incompetence" or "trained incapacity", which they associate with a return to practices of "teaching to the test" (Lauder *et al*, 1999; Ball, 1999, p200). They also refer to the emphasis on narrowly focused, classroom-based knowledge and

skills, aimed at maximising students' examination performance (Ball, 1999). In short, practices which would seem to be totally ill suited to the "glamour" of the "new economy" and the "information society", the major arguments used to justify the development of evaluation policies.

The new forms of evaluation may, furthermore, provide teachers with a powerful incentive to concentrate on the students who could "make the difference", while the schools themselves consolidate their mechanisms for the "exclusion" of pupils who show limited academic potential: children with special educational needs, ethnic minorities, socially disadvantaged groups (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Riddell *et al*, 1999; Vincent, 2000).

With regard to the teachers, there is a real danger that they might be caught between the "imperatives of prescription", the "disciplines of performance" (Ball, 1999) and the "right to manage" of the new organisational leaders (Clark & Newman, 1997). In this case, teachers would be "over determined" rather than "empowered" by the new managerial concepts (see Chapter 3 & 6). We should, therefore, devote some attention to the principles of "new professionalism".

"New Professionalism"

The reform of school governance has gone hand in hand with the promise of a new teaching professionalism, which in turn will imply transformations at a variety of levels (Hargreaves D., 1994; Caldwell & Spinks, 1998):

- development of the team and partnership working procedures associated with the "flatter" organisations;
- redefinition of professional skills, to bring them into line with the needs of the new economy ("back to basics", IT, focus on outcomes);
- diversification of contract types and forms of career advancement ("new unionism", performance-paid jobs).

In relation to the first of these areas, it should above all be stressed that there is considerable support for the need to "adjust" (subordinate) the flexibility and

initiative of individuals and groups to the overriding values and goals of the organisation. The aim is to create an organisational environment "where everyone is responsible for achieving corporate goals and everyone is enterprising in pursuit of them" (Clark & Newman, 1997, p62).

Such an approach, however, begs the question of how to reconcile the "empowerment" of teachers with the priority given by SBM supporters to "transformational leadership" and closeness to the customer (see Chapter 3).

With regard to the second area of transformation, the adjustments required to bring professional skills into line with the demands of the new economy, mention should be made of aspects related to "early literacy and mathematics; the adoption of information and communication technology; a broader view of outcomes to attach a fuller and richer meaning to the concept of "value added"; and practice in the "integrated school" (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998). This concept implies a return to basics, made more palatable by the reference to IT. The new professional demands also imply a greater emphasis on technical and administrative skills rather than substantive ones (pedagogic):

> Compare these high expectations [to analyse league tables, school and inspection reports] with what applied to most teachers until recently, when all that was required was a capacity to devise and administer classroom-based tests and report the results to parents each term.
> The role is even more demanding if value-added measures are used, where data may be provided on a classroom-by-classroom, subject-by-subject basis (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998, p136).

The "new professionalism", contrary to what the designation suggests, would therefore seem to offer limited scope for teacher autonomy and creativity. Indeed, evaluation systems exert a normalizing pressure, create conditions in which performance evaluation is extended from pupils to teachers, generate inevitable comparisons and hierarchies between teachers, and lend themselves to the institutionalisation of forms of performance-related pay (Troman, 1997, 2000; Ball, 1999).

The negative consequences for teachers of the new professional requirements are not, moreover, brushed aside by SBM supporters:

> Resources provision has rarely been adequate and teachers have been expected to be fundraisers as well as teachers, counsellors, de facto parents, welfare providers and police officers (...) Incessant attention to measurement and comparison with other schools add to the pressure of being a teacher. Structures of support and supervision have been downsized, out-sourced or have disappeared altogether (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998, p128).

However, these problems are considered to be of relatively minor importance when compared with the opportunities provided by the new forms of school governance: autonomy, flexibility, and creativity. Other authors, however, hold a far less optimistic view of the effective freedoms offered by SBM (see Smyth *et al*, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002):

An analysis of the promises made by the "new professionalism", in the light of the distinction which may be made between professionalization (a sociological project to enhance the interests of an occupational group) and professionalism (the characteristics and the internal quality of people's action within this group) leads us to adopt an equally critical stance. Indeed, the notion of professionalism advanced by the concepts under analysis does little to enhance the pedagogic dimension of a teacher's work and may represent a threat to their professionalization if external "accountability", support of the primacy of the consumer, and the "right to manage" become the dominant principles of the public system of schooling.

We should, however, be prepared for the hypothesis, which I shall discuss in greater depth in the third part of this study, that SBM will bring with it, simultaneously, tendencies towards deprofessionalization and reprofessionalization, and that these will assume different degrees of importance according to their context.

SBM - Contradictions and Potentialities

The analysis of the main principles behind SBM leads us to conclude that we are faced with a considerably more complex process than we could at first imagine from the political rhetoric and the specialist literature on the subject. This complexity stems from certain factors that SBM supporters either ignore or downplay when shaping their proposals: the importance of the context of the reform, the contradictory nature of the constituent principles of SBM, and the sociological and political interests that underlie and drive the reform of school administration.

In relation to the first of these, I should stress the enormous divergence that exists between the way in which SBM advocates describe the context that produced SBM (globalisation, increased competitiveness, intensification of the change process, frequent professional restructuring) and the institutional solutions which they propose (local dynamics, collegiality, school culture, institutional involvement).

In addition, the contextual factors of the reform - distrust of the public sector, the State's financial crisis, negative view of the quality of bureaucratic schooling - are used solely to vindicate the need for change. There is no reference to how these aspects might limit the actual range of the reforms (e.g. fostering competitive rather than "flatter" and collegiate working contexts, limiting financial support to schools, making "choice" difficult for working class families). This silence explains why some authors say that the new managerial perspectives are invested with an almost magical quality (Hamilton, 1997; Lauder *et al*, 1999). If such be the case, it is in the financial domain that the magic will really have to work, given that governments are decoupling reform from funding and, in some cases, making real cuts in their budgets for education as part of a strategy which would seem hardly compatible with the emphasis attributed to education and the quality of training of human resources (Levin, 1997; Barroso, 2000).

A second type of problem is, as has been shown throughout this Chapter, the contradictory nature of the constituent principles of SBM. Levin (1997) offered a particularly revealing summary of the inconsistencies that may be identified in this respect:

> If choice is meaningful there is no reason for parents to invest in the process of governance and improvement, any more than consumers will work hard to improve the products of a particular company as opposed to switching to another company instead (...) Both choice and local management are also potentially inconsistent with the move towards more centralized curricula and assessment. Choice is only meaningful if the things to be chosen differ in some respect. Similarly, local management is only meaningful if there are some decisions about organisational form and purpose to be made. Both local management and choice are about encouraging diversity in schooling arrangements. Common curriculum and assessment push in exactly the other direction. If all the schools are expected to teach the same, why bother with local management and choice? Moreover, institutional theory points to the tendency for all institutions of a certain kind to take a common form (Powell and Dimaggio, 1991). In schools, where assessment practices are held to have a strong influence on the entire nature of the institutions, it seems likely that more standardized assessment will lead to schools looking more like each other rather than becoming more diversified (Levin, 1997, p263).

The contradictory nature of the reforms also extends to the strategies favoured for achieving significant improvement in the quality of teaching: stress on the administrative aspect to the detriment of the pedagogic; holding local actors responsible for the success or failure of national, supranational and global policies and giving emphasis to entrepreneurial behaviour while imposing standardised forms of organisation and pedagogy.

Mention should also be made of the risks of increased social inequality inherent in SBM. Indeed, this form of management represents an important step towards the sanctioning of neo-liberal and neo-managerial educational principles. From a policy perspective, the problem of schools and their inhabitants "is construed as an absence within certain individuals of enterprising skills" (Smyth, 1999, p458). However, the triumph of neo-liberal policies has gone hand in hand with

a marked increase in inequalities (Santos *et al*, 2001; Derouet, 2002). The marketisation of education would seem to be no exception to this rule, given that choice in education is influenced by social and ethnic factors (Reay, 1998, 2001; Lauder *et al*, 1999). Some authors even consider that the education markets are guilty of "chronic failure", a failure which especially affects the more vulnerable educational institutions and social strata (Dale & Robertson, 2001, p30). This failure is the result, among other things, of difficulty in:

- effecting the "spread" of reforms to depleted and residual communities;
- reversing the decline of the "unpopular suppliers", due to the pressure and strategic orientation of the more powerful consumers.

Indeed, the policies of choice of school have fuelled, in many cases, the trend among the most sought-after schools to form "middle-class clubs" and to segregate pupils considered to be elements of risk (Dale & Robertson, 2001, p130).

In view of the critique to which SBM has been subjected throughout this chapter the question remains as to why it continues to make itself felt so strongly in contemporary educational policies (see also Weiler, 1999). I would suggest that there are three main factors involved. In the first place, the development of forms and structures of "high modernity" is exerting pressure to bring the education system into line with the new features of the labour market and the employment structure (neo- and post-Fordism, accent on the tertiary sector, subcontracting). Secondly, we have the stepping-up of the "governamentability" project (Foucault, 1979), begun with the liberal societies of the nineteenth century and geared towards the production of a "mind that would govern the soul" (Popkewitz, 1999, p16). In this sense, personal autonomy (and by extension organisational "autonomy") should not be understood as "the antithesis of political power but [as] a key term in its exercise" (Rose & Miller, 1992, quoted in Popkewitz, 1999, p19).

Finally, we should bear in mind that SBM offers undoubted advantages to the State, when it comes to handling conflicts (division between local actors,

isolation and localization of problems), legitimising policies (transfer of responsibilities to local level, invisibility of power, relinquishing of routine management problems) and recovering the credibility lost during recent decades. SBM thus constitutes an extremely useful political strategy, even if reforms in school administration may have no positive impact whatsoever on the quality of pupils' learning.

These considerations do not mean, of course, that the "decentralising" agenda constitutes an ideologically monolithic block. On the contrary, the term "decentralisation" is, as has already been mentioned, supported by extremely diverse political sensibilities (see *SBM - a definition).* In current educational reforms, there is therefore a frequent convergence of different agendas, interest groups and action logics (Barroso, 1999, 2000). It would seem, however, that recent decades have been dominated, in respect of school governance, by the triumph of the neo-liberal and technocratic agendas, to the detriment of projects based on a granting of real decision-making power to schools and local communities (Stoer *et al*, 1990; Fernandes, 1995; Taylor *et al*, 1997; Vincent & Tomlison, 1997; Ball, 1999; Robertson, 1999; Santos *et al*, 2001).

But this is not inevitable. I should therefore like to stress, paraphrasing Levin (1997), that the analysis I have made in this chapter should not be read as being simply a critique of strategies of decentralisation, choice and assessment:

> Each strategy could, depending on its application, have useful outcomes. Decentralisation could allow communities, and especially non-educators, to play a more important role in directing their schools and in meeting local needs (...) Choice could push parents and students to think more about the kind of school that would be of greatest benefit, and it could push schools to think more about the needs of those they serve. *Measures to avoid school choice becoming a means of social segregation would be especially important,* as would policies that encouraged real diversity in school programs, not only in appearances. Assessment can be a means of giving everybody involved with education more meaningful information about how well students are doing. (...) [The key is] to look at the real impact of policies and how these can be shaped in desirable ways (Levin, 1997,p 266, my emphasis).

The process obviously requires, on the part of local actors, a capacity for critical intervention and determination in the face of the more problematic aspects of current educational policies. No easy task, given the sophisticated forms of social regulation prevailing in contemporary societies (Amin, 1996; Menter *et al*, 1997; Gordon & Whitty, 1997; Sarmento *et al*, 1999; Stoer & Cortesão, 1999; Lyon, 1999).

In the main body of the thesis I will return to many of the issues raised here and explore more concretely and specifically the extent to which the central tenets of analysis are born out, or contradicted, by the case of primary school reform in Portugal. In fact, having described the principal premises upon which school autonomy is based, it is now time to look at the extent of the phenomenon in Portugal, the conditions that have influenced its development, and the constraints on this process.

Local Management of Education in Portugal (1974-1998)

Social, Political and Educational Antecedents

Portugal is one of the oldest European states, having acquired its political independence in the twelfth century and its present-day frontiers in the mid thirteenth century. The need to remain independent of Spain was the basis of an early process of centralization of political power which was strengthened, in the fifteenth century, with the maritime epic and the policy of colonial exploitation. Successive versions of the "fool's paradise" (the spice trade, Brazilian gold, the "rediscovery" of Africa) allowed Portugal to maintain its colonial empire until the final quarter of the twentieth century. Its socio-economic structures remained, however, curiously under-developed. Thus, when the Republic was declared (1910), the overwhelming majority of the people were traditional agricultural labourers, and an extremely high proportion was illiterate (around two-thirds). Besides this, the middle class was politically powerless against the alliance formed by the great landowners, the Catholic Church and bankers with

overseas connections (Afonso, 1995). As a result the First Republic (1910-1926) was short-lived and turbulent, fraught with successive changes of government and great political and social instability.

In 1926, a military coup gave rise to a fascist-style political regime: the "New State". Proceeding along lines similar to those adopted in some others European countries, Portuguese politicians suppressed most of the citizens' civic liberties, abolished trade unions and political parties, introduced censorship and political persecution and gave particular attention to the indoctrination of children and young people. This is the background to the development in Portugal of mass education which, contrary to what had taken place in democratic countries, was not concerned either with education for citizenship or the granting of minimum educational qualifications. It was aimed essentially at educating for "passivity" (Formosinho, 1990). Primary education in particular (nicknamed the "sacred workshop of souls") was surrounded by almost obsessive precautions: teacher training colleges were closed for a number of years for extensive overhaul; teachers' meetings were forbidden, as was any discussion concerning the aims and objectives of education; syllabus content, including textbooks, was redefined in such a way as to throw into relief the central values of the regime (God, Nation Family and Authority) and to avoid the excessive "intellectualisation" of children; the day-to-day life of the school was subject to rigid control, which even included the way classrooms were decorated and the physical appearance of the teachers (dress, absence of make-up); teachers, in a position of extreme subservience to the State, were obliged to swear allegiance to the regime, to seek permission to marry and to comply with regulations concerning their conduct in the school and in the community; schools were closely supervised, not only through formal mechanisms (inspectors and super inspectors) but also through "civic" appeals for the political denouncement of any teacher who departed from the established code (Bivar, 1975; Monica, 1978). The New State thus took the country's centralist tradition to an extreme. Any important educational decisions became the exclusive domain of the central administration:

curriculum, finance, staffing, pedagogy, teacher training, design and location of the buildings, textbooks, equipment, daily running of the school.

This state of affairs persisted even after the fall of fascist dictatorships in other European countries, which forced the New State to change tack in its political discourse. This was in fact the beginning of a new phase for the regime: the phase of "proudly alone", which heralded the inevitable decline of the New State. Meanwhile, in spite of external pressures (victory of the allies) and some internal pressure (advance of industrialization), "the country's economy remained relatively closed until the late sixties, when the colonial war and the expansion of world trade led to massive foreign investment" (Afonso, 1994, p95). Following an unsuccessful attempt at liberalization in the late sixties, which coincided with the withdrawal and death of the dictator Oliveira Salazar, the New State was abolished in 1974. What became known as the "Carnation Revolution" or "April Revolution", the military coup and popular uprising which helped to overthrow the dictatorship, signalled the beginning of a period of democracy in Portugal, after almost half a century of dictatorship (1926-1974).

The democratisation of the country coincided with a period of rapid transformations in the productive structures, initiated during World War II (Costa, 1975; Loureiro *et al* 1985). These changes eventually led to a drastic reduction of the agricultural population and a concomitant growth in the service sector. In this respect, superficially at least, Portugal began to resemble other developed countries. This resemblance belies, however, a complex social structure characterized by deep divides, different rates of development and a very particular role played by the State in social regulation. This is why Portuguese society has been described as semi-peripheral. This is defined by Santos (1990), one of the Portuguese authors who has been most concerned with this issue, as follows:

> Semi-peripheral societies ensure the relative satisfaction of the immediate interests of wide sectors of the population (...) in the light of prevailing models of consumption. This, however, is due neither to high levels of productivity nor to great formal

> institutionalisation of the relationship between capital and labour, as exists in the central countries. It is rather the result of a complex social network in which this relationship is developed and which, in its turn, creates mechanisms to compensate for delays in production relationships while at the same time shattering the conflicts between capital and labour. This mitigation of conflict is not due to the presence of the middle classes (intermediaries between the *bourgeoisie* and the workers), as is the case in central countries, but to the presence of social strata and fractions of classes located beside and below them (...) The working of these mechanisms presupposes a complex system of social arbitration (...) *entrusted to the State, which then tends to play a central role in social regulation* (Santos, 1990, pp109-110, my emphasis).

In relation to the political structure of semi-peripheral societies, it is also important to stress that the power stemming from the role played by the State in the sphere of social regulation does not convert easily into the legitimation of the State, as is the case in "core" countries:

- the functioning of the state, even when democratic, relies on an extremely delicate political balance (Santos, 1990);
- there is a far more marked discrepancy between the legal framework and social practices than in other countries. This means that the juridical and political framework has difficulty in penetrating social relations and is rarely fully implemented (Santos, 1990).

This discrepancy between the legal framework and social practices will, as we shall see, take on different forms in the period following the "April Revolution"; and it is particularly important if we are to understand the successive advances, regressions and fresh starts that characterize the history of school autonomy in Portugal (1974-98).

School autonomy in Portugal: self-management experiment, recentralization, "soft" devolution and devolution-modernisation

Following the establishment of political democracy in Portugal, local school management went through three clearly distinct phases, that is the self-

management experiment, recentralization, and "soft devolution" (Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994; Estevão, 1995). It is this latter process which seems to be gaining strength, heralding a new phase more marked by devolution policies and *rapprochement* to managerial models of a neo-managerial type (Afonso, 1997, Formosinho & Ferreira, 1998; Dias, 1999). This will be designated as "devolution-modernisation".

Self-management experiment

In the first months of the revolution, "turbulent meetings of teachers, students and other school staff dismissed school directors appointed by the Salazar government on a basis of political trust" (Afonso, 1994, p26). Power was thus shifted to school plenaries and to so-called "ad-hoc" committees, elected at those meetings (Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994).

This process seems to have permeated all levels of education, although it would seem to have been particularly relevant on secondary and higher education. However, in-depth studies so far carried out have focused mainly on secondary education (Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994; Costa, 7) and we must wait for more substantial evidence concerning the form the process has taken in other educational sub-systems.

It is nevertheless undeniable that the "April Revolution" brought with it a mass mobilization of social actors - virtually unparalleled in post-war European history - which made itself felt in practically every sector of Portuguese society (Santos, 1990).

In the case of education, it saw the beginning of "a process of constructing alternative forms of school governance, although outside the jurisdiction of any higher authority or official orientation" (Lima, 1999, p43). Thus was born the first phase of *democratic school management* (the designation by which the movement came to be known), a phase marked by active participation and, in some cases, strong opposition to established political directives (Lima, 1992). This "occupation of schools" (Stoer, 1985) did not take place within the

framework of any project for decentralization or devolution: it was simply actors imposing themselves on the "system" (Grácio, 1986, Lima, 1992, 1999; Afonso, 1994).

The State, meanwhile, held itself in *reserve* but *ready* to make a comeback and be reformed (Lima, 1992, p219). Indeed, the administrative system remained almost intact. The ability demonstrated by the Portuguese State to "remain intact throughout a generalized administrative paralysis, for a long time and in the midst of intense social struggles" (Santos, 1990, p33) may even be deemed remarkable.

Political Recentralization (1976-1986)

If education represented one of the sectors in which the self-management experiment first made itself felt, it was also one of the areas in which it quickly became clear that the State was attempting to stage a "comeback". The attempt at *early normalisation* (Lima, 1999, p64) was made mainly through the publication of norms intended to regulate the management of primary (Decree-Law 68/74, November 16) and secondary schools (Decree-law n°735/74, of 21st December).

Although criticized and, to begin with, ignored, these documents nonetheless represent the beginning of a process of reconstruction of the paradigm of political centralization and the transition to a second phase in the democratic management of schools (Lima, 1992, 1999).

This phase, usually designated as the *democratic management of schools,* represents, by virtue of "strategic" omission in the preceding phase, the institutionalisation of a strikingly contradictory SBM model. On the one hand, it formally sanctions respect for the principles of democracy and participation when it speaks of the election and collegiate nature of the governing bodies of schools (board of directors, pedagogic and administrative boards). On the other hand, it strips these bodies of any decision-making power through tight regulations which turn them into the mere executors of directives and policies

decided elsewhere. Therefore schools continue, in essence, to be "local services of the State", deprived of any powers of their own and with scant relations with the local communities (Formosinho, 1989). Education, pedagogy and teacher training thus remain subject to a hyper-centralized administration (Lima, 1999). The instruments of control and assessment have, however, been sufficiently relaxed to allow teachers a certain autonomy within the classroom: non-existence of national examinations (except as an entry requirement for higher education), assessment carried out by teachers and their peers, freedom to choose textbooks, inspection only for administrative purposes. All this notwithstanding, it is common knowledge that these new powers won by teachers in the April Revolution were reduced, in this second phase of the democratic management of schools, "to a markedly insularized authority restricted to the carrying out of rules and regulations from above (...), which in turn ensured the greater supremacy of the Ministry of Education and granted it exclusive powers to govern and direct the system and the schools" (Lima, 1999, p65).

This state of affairs had particularly pernicious effects on primary education, where the old hierarchy was fully reinstated in 1977 (Formosinho & Machado 1999), despite the preservation of the self-management model introduced in 1974, which turned plenary teachers' meetings, designated as the *school board,* into the main body responsible for making internal technical and pedagogic decisions (see Chapter 4). This situation is further aggravated by the fact that the last major reform in primary teaching took place in 1938, that is, when the golden age of the New State was at its height. Changes that have taken place since that time have therefore been "of an implementational nature, occurring above all as the result of adjustments, made frequently, by dispatch (...) [furthering] a sedimentation of orientations, often of a contradictory nature, and thus paving the way for cracks, ambiguities and fragments in the registers of the meaning and conduct of the school order" (Sarmento, 1998a, pp38-39).

The complexity produced by this situation is visible in the almost asphyxiating web of authorities to which primary schools were successively and

cumulatively subjected in the period 1974 to 1998: central departments of the Ministry of Education; school delegations (district structures and specific councils for primary education, which go back to the New State); local authorities (1984); decentralized departments of the Ministry of Education. This network of interlinked administrative bodies has forced schools to liaise with innumerable actors, in a relationship which not infrequently resembles a maze (Sarmento, 1998b) in the sense that it leads to:

- both the relinquishing and the duplication of responsibilities among the various actors;
- autonomous practices, side by side with subordination, produced by the strategic moves arising from such a multiplicity of regulations (Macedo, 1995; Sarmento, 1998a).

The differences between primary and other levels of education are, as we shall see, to become even more marked in the wake of the educational reform of 1986.

Deconcentration

In the mid eighties the centralist model of Portuguese education began to be subject to some dispute. Successive ministries of education publicly advocated a change of paradigm:

> The schools are almost suffocated under an avalanche of circulars saying "do this" or "do that" - irrespective of the kind of school (...) This is *a system which, all the time it continues under central management, it is hopeless to try to reform* (João de Deus Pinheiro, 1985, in Lima, 1995, p58, my emphasis).

> What is needed is to reverse the rationale of the system. *Our objective is called school autonomy (...)* (Roberto Carneiro, 1987, in Lima, 1995, p58, my emphasis).

These and other declarations were the driving force behind a process of reform in which there were sometimes clashes between educational interests and political agendas: how to systematize and dovetail the many changes in the

system brought about by the April Revolution; how to extend the processes of participation to new partners; how to modernize and de-bureaucratize the educational system.

It is therefore unsurprising that the Basic Education Law (LBSE, 1986) should have adopted an ambiguous stance on school administration. Indeed, while not denying the possibility of decentralization, the law provided essentially for forms of deconcentration of services (Formosinho *et al*, 2000). As the Law began to be more operationally defined, the modernizing, technocratic agenda took priority over concerns with democratisation and decentralization (Lima, 1995; Dias, 1999):

- the regional education offices are considered to be deconcentrated bodies for the coordination and support the administrative autonomy granted to schools (Decree-Law nº 3/87 of 3rd January);
- the responsibilities attributed to preparatory and secondary schools barely differ from the traditional framework of pedagogic management and cultural activity (Decree-Law nº 43/89);
- the "responsibilities" of local authorities continue to be viewed essentially as "obligations" in the domain of school infra-structures and school facilities (Decree-Law nº 77/84, of 8th March), with no significant shift in terms of decision-making power in education (Fernandes, 1995; Dias, 1999).

An attempt by the Ministry to create a new model of SBM (decree-law nº172/91) was abandoned following a short period of experimentation and evaluation.

In the light of this situation, Lima (1995) seems right when he says that:

> the system's rationale was not *inverted* so much as *reconverted* (...); that it had not been possible to release schools from the bureaucratic pressures of the ministry, but rather that an attempt had been made to release the central departments of the ministry from the executive and operational pressures felt by the schools; and finally that the responsibilities of central government were not *residual* but wholly *essential"* (p67).

Formosinho *et al* (2000) share the same opinion when they classify the eighties as a period of "decentralizing rhetoric and practices of deconcentrated administration" (Formosinho *et al*, 2000, p38). It was essentially a question of modernizing the administration of state schools and initiating a process of transfer of responsibilities with a minimum of political spin-off at local level (Fernandes, 1995; Lima, 1995; Dias, 1999).

It is important to stress, however, that the intended administrative modernisation was not restricted to the sphere of the central administration. Schools too began to be prepared for new professional and managerial ideas[6]. In this preparation four essential aspects should be mentioned:

- the attempt to mobilize school actors for the peripheral execution of central decisions, which was clearly spelled out in the principal slogans of the time ("reform lies with the teachers"; "reform for every school"). This policy of mobilization was accompanied by a certain lauding of diversity in the implementation of these decisions (Lima, 1999);
- the slow but progressive participation of parents in the schools (see Chapter 4);
- the adoption, both in political discourse and in new educational directives, of concepts associated with the new managerialism (school culture, professional management, strong leadership, closer customer relations). The idea of developing "school plans"[7], for example, was sanctioned in legislation concerning the autonomy of preparatory and secondary schools (1989). These schools also had the obligation to develop organisational projects, of a cross-curricular nature (*area -escola).*
- an increasing transfer to schools of responsibility for dealing with disagreement (Lima, 2001), despite the paucity of delegated powers (Afonso, 1999).

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[6] The idea of the school project, for example, was sanctioned in legislation concerning the autonomy of preparatory and secondary schools (1989), as was the obligation to develop a school project of a cross-curricular nature.

[7]" School projects", according the official and unofficial Portuguese language

Primary schools were rather left out of this process, since the legislation on new school responsibilities did not apply to them, and they were therefore not obliged to produce their own educational project. However, they were affected by the same discourse of autonomy and subjected, moreover, to certain of the new managerial requirements: the need to draft school regulations, annual plans of activities and cross -curricular projects (see Chapters 3 & 4).

At the same time we begin to see the emergence of a training structure which, besides the traditional scientific and didactic components, gives increasing emphasis to the so-called transversal and organisational skills: curricular management, school administration and governance, assessment, project methodologies. There was, in particular, considerably increased attention paid to school administration, which cannot but be associated with the managerial and technocratic discourses that began to make themselves felt during this period [8] (Lima, 1997; Formosinho *et al*, 2000).

The relevance of this kind of training to the adoption of the new managerial concepts is recognized by many of those involved in the process:

> I began to realize the importance of this kind of issue [school culture, school project] during a course I did at the School of Education some years ago. And later, of course, when I attended a course in Supervision (Rita, head teacher of Main School).

> On the course I'm doing, all you hear is, 'parents must participate more in the school, parents must come to the school more often'... And when I get to school and see the announcement of yet another parents' meeting, I think, 'Who will they have it in for this time?' (Manuela, associate teacher, Main School).

It became widely accepted that what was needed was specialized training for the carrying out of pedagogic and administrative duties in schools (Formosinho *et al*, 2000). This led to a much greater emphasis on these aspects within teacher training.

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[8] The Community programmes themselves - Prodep, Forgest - stated that their aims were training for school leadership and other duties related to school organisation (Despatch nº 301/ME/92, of 11th November, nº 2, in Formosinho *et al*, 2000, p42).

International support for neo-managerial concepts aided the spread of such ideas in Portugal. Indeed, the training boom witnessed in this country in the closing decades of the twentieth century, as a result of EC funding and tighter regulation of teachers' careers, took place despite the lack of sufficiently qualified researchers and trainers (Lima, 1997). The way was therefore wide open for an uncritical acceptance of these concepts, which depicted school administration as an essentially technical or instrumental area in the service of modernisation policies and rationalization of the educational system (Lima, 1997, p38).

In this way, the Portuguese education system embarked on a road that had already been traversed in other countries:

> Despite delays in relation to other countries, here too educational democratisation and administrative decentralization were progressively disappearing from political norms and discourses, submerged beneath a technocratically inspired and modernizing set of values that appealed to an economic and managerial rationale, and thus shaped an apparently *apolitical and consensual discourse* (Lima, 1999, p64).

Devolution-modernisation: The Formal Sanctioning of School Autonomy (1998)

In spite of the discursive and political importance it had assumed in the eighties and nineties, the principle of school autonomy only achieved full official recognition towards the end of the twentieth century (Decree-Law N° 115/A, 1998). The revival of the issue of school autonomy coincided with the return to power of the socialist party (1996-2002). The "passion for education", trumpeted during the electoral campaign, led to the drafting of the Educational Pact for the Future (1996), which made school autonomy a priority for the development of the country. The initiative also involved the request for the drafting of a prior study for the carrying out of a "programme to consolidate

school autonomy" (Barroso, 1997), which served as the basis for the definition of Decree-Law N°115/A, 1998 (see Appendix).

Therefore the question of state school autonomy was, from the word go, the brainchild of the State and the government, to be put into effect by the Ministry of Education (Afonso, 1999).

The new legislative guidelines revealed, both in the rationale chosen and in the options made, considerable similarities to the neo-managerial models advocated in SBM literature and implemented in other countries (see SBM - a definition). This convergence derived, in the first place, from the fact that the law sanctioned a broad framework of areas in which autonomy could become a reality (strategic, pedagogic, administrative, financial and organisational) while reserving for the central administration the regulation of the process (see Table 3).

Table 3 - Responsibilities of Administration

Transition Phase	First Phase of Autonomy	Second Phase of Autonomy
Approval of internal regulation	**Negotiation of Autonomy Contracts**	***Assessment of Autonomy Contracts (first Phase)**
appreciation of school consortium (educational project pupil trajectories, solutions to problems of isolation)	curriculum management; appreciation of partnerships; non-teaching staff; budget management; specific rules for classes; timetables	*** Assessment of the application to the second phase (appreciation of the project, local resources, educational quality, involvement of other partners ...)**

At the same time, the new management model was extremely ambiguous with regard to the *minimum* responsibilities to be handed over to schools. It virtually confined itself to extending to primary education the limited powers enjoyed by the other levels of education in 1989: cultural programmes, the freedom to create "peripheral" curricula locally, and the carrying out of pedagogic and administrative directives. In these circumstances, the negotiation and evaluation of autonomy contracts inevitably proceeded on the basis of an extremely lopsided power relationship between the central administration and the schools - that is, against a background of change in forms of educational regulation[9] rather than a real decentralization of decision-making.

Secondly, some approximation to the new management models was reflected in the increased scope for parental participation in decision-making. At the same time, teacher representation was restricted in such a way as to be no greater than that of other members of the school community (parents, local authorities, representatives of associations, representatives of non-teaching staff). This is where we find, albeit in moderation, a reformulation of relations between "producers" and "consumers" and between "the State" and "civil society" (see Chapter 6).

The new legislative directives presupposed, in addition, a distinct strengthening/broadening of the managerial dimension of school life (see Appendix). This bolstering affected structural (number and responsibilities of management organs; development and sanctioning of middle-management structures), cultural ("educational administration centred on the school") and procedural aspects (school project, school regulations, plans of activities, assessment of school development).

This approximation to the neo-managerial paradigms was further emphasised by a set of provisions which, while not directly associated with the new management model, were established along parallel lines: the institutionalisation of standardised evaluation for all schools (4th year), the curricular reorganization of basic education (more flexible trajectories,

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[9] From direct state rule (state government) to "negotiation" and evaluation

increased managerial responsibilities for each school) and the clarification of "outputs" for students in basic and secondary education.

It should be stressed, however, that although factors were in place for the development of the new managerial concepts, this did not make "school autonomy" necessary and inevitable. Indeed, there were still constraints that might significantly lessen the impact of the new concepts:

- the possibility of financial autonomy was curtailed by the huge proportion of the school budget devoted to staff expenditure (Afonso, 1999);
- management of human resources was limited by the existence of a national system for teacher placement
- the new legislation contains a variety of loopholes that allow the administration to be anything from generous to parsimonious when it comes to the granting of decision-making powers to schools (Dias, 1999; see also Table 3).

Given this scenario, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the new scope for autonomy granted to schools may continue to be, to a great extent, residual. It is in this context that a study centred on "the context of practice" assumes particular relevance. Since this analysis is the subject of Parts II and III of this research, it now remains for me to try to interpret the meaning of the changes that have taken place, at the *formal level,* in the governance of Portuguese state schools (1974 -2002).

The socio-historical approach adopted would suggest the existence of distinct phases in the recent evolution of school administration in Portugal. In a first phase, which occurred essentially between 1974 and 1986, policy decisions on these issues seem to have been motivated mainly by internal factors of the following type:

- the participatory explosion that accompanied the April Revolution allowing for the development of self-governing management styles in Portuguese schools (1974-1976);

- the subsequent "political normalisation" that implied a return to the centralist matrix of the Portuguese education system (1976-1986).

What stands out during this period, despite changes in the political situation and managerial logics, is a certain continuity in terms of "the school management structure", "the shortage of school managers with proper social status", and "the peripheral nature of community participation" (Afonso, 1999, p.61). The margin of teacher autonomy at this time, though residual, should not be discounted. It constitutes, after all, "the basis of teacher professionalism", (Afonso, 1999). It includes the choice of textbooks and supplementary materials, group/class composition, pedagogic management and control of teacher and pupil evaluation processes (see Part II). It is further strengthened by the non-existence of an external evaluation system, by the loss of power of the inspection structure that followed in the wake of the Revolution, and by the very unwieldiness and ultra-regulation of the system.

From the mid eighties there are signs of an increasing convergence between political discourses and educational directives, compared with trends towards "devolution" taking place in the central countries. This convergence seems further to have increased with the recent drafting of a new system of administration for primary and secondary schools (1998).These moments may therefore signal new phases in the course of the history of Portuguese public administration. Among the most striking indications of change are: the gradual support for the professionalization of school management; the increasing importance attached to middle-management structures; the valorisation of the organisational dimension of the school; the introduction of managerial instruments of a neo-managerial cast ("school project", external evaluation); the appeal for closer ties with civil society and the labour market, and the adoption of a policy discourse in which technocratic concerns (modernisation, flexibility, evaluation) replace democratic preoccupations (equality of access, success and participation).

CHAPTER TWO
METHODOLOGY

The educational agenda of recent decades has been characterized by ongoing waves of reform (Glatter, 1999). This scenario has acted as a catalyst for the development of policy studies (Halpin, 1994; Walford, 1994) and, especially, for the appearance of a range of research studies which try to "break ranks both with empiricist accounts of educational policy and with those which rest upon managerialist perspectives on the policy process" (Troyna, 1994, p3). In this Chapter I will describe the main steps involved in my own personal attempt to make a contribution in this field: section 1 describes the antecedents, focus and strategies of inquiry of the study; section 2 discusses the main aspects of the research plan; section 3 summarizes the procedures used for data collection and analysis and section 4 presents a description of the schools where the field work was conducted.

The Research Boundaries: Antecedents, Structure and Methodology

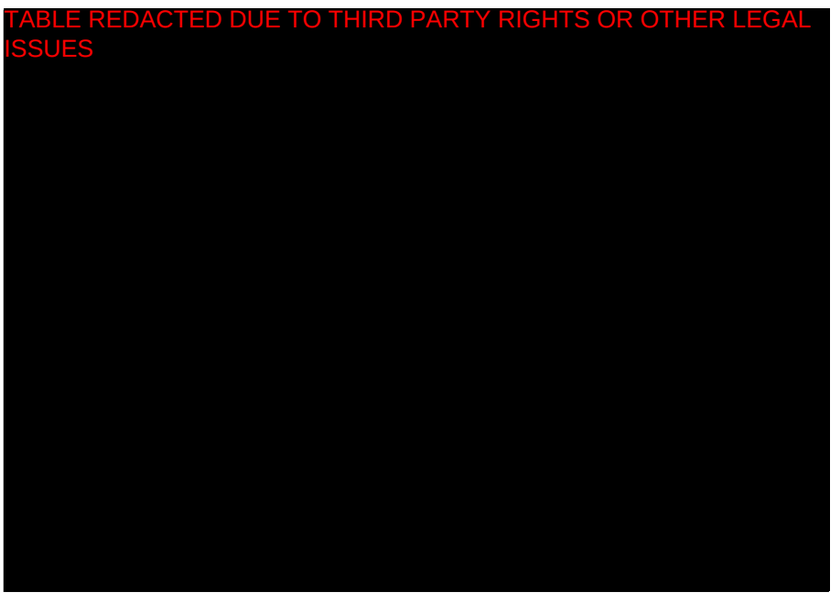
Antecedents and Reasons for the Study: "If you don't know, why do you ask?"

Some authors maintain that it is impossible to pinpoint the precise moment at which a research project begins, given all the complex factors that influence the researcher's commitment to a particular area of study: backgrounding, acquaintance with the field, personal values and interests (Stake, 1995; Santos *et al*, 2001). This view aptly describes the way in which the present research began to take shape. The democratization of education has been a recurrent theme in my work over a long period (see Dias, 1985; Davies *et al*, 1989; Carvalho & Dias, 1993; Santos & Dias, 1993; Dias, 1999). Moreover, being a teacher of educational sociology and school administration in Portugal, I was constantly confronted with the fact that the process of political democratization in my country (1974)

has not been accompanied by a comparable process of social and educational democratization nor by an equalization of educational opportunities (see Table 4).

Table 4 – Primary School Non-Achievement Rate

(according to parents' socio-professional category)



(Source: ME/GEP, 1991)

Furthermore, I witnessed with particular concern the growing assertion of neo-managerial and neo-liberal concepts in Portuguese political life in the closing decades of the 20th century. Indeed, my regular professional contacts with Portuguese schools raised my awareness of the risks of (increased) social differentiation that seemed to come in the wake of the new educational policies arising from neo-liberalism and neo-managerialism. In particular evidence in Portugal were the effects of the participation of middle class parents in what I came to term 'the selective modernisation of primary schooling": legitimate or camouflaged practices in the choice of school; the creation of logistic, recreational and cultural structures in a restricted number of state schools; increasing curricular differentiation between "rich" and "poor" schools [1].

[1] noticeable particularly in the field of extra-curricular activities and new curricular guidelines (see Conclusions).

The idea of carrying out research on these issues was bolstered by the publication in 1998 of a new management model for Portuguese schools (Decree-Law n ° 115/A), which included many of the basic principles of SBM and which was based on a political discourse that tended to dilute the constitutional responsibilities of the State with regard to the democratization and quality of state schooling in Portugal (see Dias, 1999).

The oblivion to which Southern European countries have been consigned in the contemporary debate over school governance, despite their undeniable idiosyncrasies in the field of the Welfare State and the development of mass schooling, helped to strengthen my decision to make the issue of "devolution" the central theme of my doctoral thesis.
For all these reasons, this research is devoted to an analysis of the local management of education in Portugal and the changes associated with the implementation of a new SBM model in Portuguese schools (1998-2002).

Structure of the Research: Strategies of Inquiry and Main Phases

Conceptual Structure

The design of all research projects, including the qualitative ones, requires conceptual organisation (Stake, 1995). It should therefore be mentioned that the point of departure of the present study was the concept of policy cycle, outlined by Bowe *et al* (1992):

> We envisage three primary policy contexts, each context consisting of a number of arenas of action, some public, and some private. The first context, the *context of influence*, is where public policy is normally initiated. It is here that policy discourses are constructed. It is here that parties struggle to influence the definition and social purposes of education, what it means to be educated (...)
> This context of influence has a symbiotic but none the less uneasy relation to the second context, the *context of policy text production*. Because while influence is often related to the

> articulation of narrow interests and dogmatic ideologies, policy texts are normally articulated in the language of the general public good (...)
> Policies then are textual interventions but they also carry with them material constraints and possibilities. The responses to these texts have "real" consequences: The consequences are experienced within the third context, the *context of practice* (Bowe *et al*, 1992, pp19-20).

This conceptualisation of policy argues that educational policies are not merely *texts (a* particular "law", document or set of formal guidelines)[2]. They are also *processes, discourses and outcomes.* A similar view is presented by Taylor *et al* (1997), when they affirm that it is necessary "to understand both the background and context of policies, including their historical antecedents and relations with other texts, and the shorter and longer term impact of policies in practice" (p47).

It should be underlined that these distinctions also presuppose non-linear relationships between structure and agency and between the various "fields" implicated in the implementation of a particular policy decision (e.g. the educational field, the administrative field, the "civil society" field). In fact, "[policy] analysis requires an understanding that is based not on constraint *or* agency but on the changing relationship between constraint *and* agency and their inter-penetration" (Ball, 1994, p21; italics in the original). This inter-penetration presupposes bringing together the "micro" and "macro" levels of investigation (Ozga, 1990). This research therefore takes as its principal reference those studies that have attempted to relate, from a critical and ethnographic perspective, large-scale changes in contemporary societies to the processes of organisational and cultural restructuring of state schools.
The difficulties inherent in this enterprise have been most effectively summed up by the following authors:

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[2] It may even be the case, as we shall see in this study, that some *texts* are not even read first hand (Ball, 1994).

- the existence of "theoretically crude cross -national policy analysis which make facile juxtapositions between policies developed in different national contexts" (Halpin & Troyna 1994, p203);
- the influential "power discourses " that structure the field of school administration (Cookson, 1994);
- the trend towards both "disciplinary parochialism " and excessive eclecticism in the approach to contemporary educational policies (Dale, 1992; Halpin & Troyna 1994).

The risks attendant on this research area, aggravated by the limited resources available, led me to limit the scope of my study. In this way, I decided to focus it mainly on the analysis of the "context of practice", all the while bearing in mind the multifaceted nature of the impact of the reforms:

> there is an important distinction to be made in regard to [reform] effects, a distinction between what might be called first order and second order effects. First order effects are changes in practice or structure (which are evident in particular sites and across the system), and second order effects are the impact of these changes on patterns of social access, opportunity and social justice (Ball, ppp25-26).

Research Focus

The importance given in this research to the impact of devolution policies derived, to a great extent, from the very objectives of the research:

- to identify the organisational, professional, social, cultural and political transformations undergone in Portuguese primary schools at the turn of the 20th century (1998-2002)
- to clarify the influence of neo-managerial perspectives in societies, such as the Portuguese, which differ considerably from the more developed countries (see Chapter 1).

The option was also closely linked with the diversity of interpretations to which the impact of the devolution policies has given rise in the scientific community:

> Most advocates of choice and school autonomy base their support on claims that competition will enhance the efficiency

> and responsiveness of the schools and thus increase their effectiveness (...) while others see them as a way of giving disadvantaged children the sorts of opportunities hitherto given only to those who can afford to buy them thorough private schooling (...) my own reading of the evidence suggests that there is little hope of such dreams being realised in the absence of broader policies that challenge deeper social and cultural inequality (Whitty, 2002, p11).

The interpretational conflicts in this domain are not restricted to the social impact of the devolution policies. The very process of professional and organisational restructuring of the schools has provoked contradictory readings. Thus, certain authors question the expected changes in these areas, due to the marked disparity between the "means" employed (organisational) and the outcomes envisaged (professional and pedagogic). These reservations are exacerbated when the issue is raised of the "globalisation" of devolution policies.

> In these [school choice and diversity] and other areas there has been a clear tendency towards convergence across a range of states in general discourse and broad objectives of education policy. However, there is less evidence of convergence in the details of policy and in the actual structures and processes in different countries (Green, 1999, p60).

In other words, it is necessary to be aware of the extent to which local administrative traditions and cultures of practice tend to "frame", temper and refract such global policy discourses. Given this, it seemed to me of particular relevance to highlight, in this research, the main features and "policy effects"of the new model of governance of Portuguese State schools (Decree-law Nº115/A, 1998).

It seemed to me equally relevant that the fieldwork be conducted in primary education. In fact, this level of schooling undoubtedly constitutes the principal locus of political and administrative dependence to be identified within the Portuguese educational system (Sarmento, 1998, 2002; Formosinho *et al*, 2000). The extent to which it may or may not take on board the new political directives

regarding school governance will therefore be a powerful indicator of the breadth and depth of these innovations.

Strategies of Inquiry and Research Structure

The roots: critical theory and critical ethnography

Any research procedure involves a wide variety of epistemological, ontological, methodological and procedural options (Silva, 2001). This study takes its main inspiration from the field of critical theory and critical ethnography and, within this field, from those studies that sought to analyse the impact of devolution policies in school settings (see especially Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Vincent, 1996; 2001; Menter *et al*, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1997; Woods *et al*, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Arnott and Raab, 2000; Gewirtz, 2001, 2002; Van Zanten, 2002).

While critical theory does not constitute a unified theoretical and epistemological corpus, it does take for granted a relatively wide set of shared assumptions:

> that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of experience or removed from some sort of ideological inscription; (...) that certain groups in any society are privileged over others (...) that oppression has many faces (...) that mainstream research practices are generally, although mostly unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender oppression (McLaren, 2000 pp139-140).

In this sense, the aspiration to neutrality and objectivity that is a feature of the positivist tradition has been considered by various authors as a way of disregarding the reflexivity and knowledge of ordinary actors (Silva, 2001; Caria, 1999, 2000).

This being the case, the ethnographic perspective behind this research may be taken as a *method* rather than a simple research *technique*[3]. Indeed it is the viewpoint, rather than the techniques employed that gives a study its interpretative matrix:

> What makes such work interpretative or qualitative is a matter of substantive focus and intent, rather than of procedure of data collection, that is, a research technique does not constitute a research method (Erickson, 1996, quoted in Silva, 2001, p266).

However, the attention give in this research to the ethnographic method does not derive exclusively from the epistemological and theoretical premises underlying the study. It derives, also, to a great extent, from the very objectives of the research. Indeed, it would be difficult either to embark upon an analysis of the impact of devolution policies in Portuguese primary schools (first and second order effects of the reform) or to evaluate the influence of neo-managerial concepts in Portuguese state schools, without having recourse to the ethnographic method. Ethnography, in fact, provides ideal access to "situated discourses", "specific tactics" and "precise and tenuous power relations operating in local settings" (Ball, 1994, p2). It also constitutes a method that lends itself to reflection on the technocratic and instrumental nature of the new management concepts. "From critical theory, [critical ethnographers] inherit a forceful criticism of the positivist conception of science and instrumental rationality (Mc Laren, 2000, p140).

In addition, ethnography is often about the "power - knowledge" relations in social settings, about giving voice to the unheard (Ball, 1994). Those with the least to gain from policy devolution - teachers and socially disadvantaged families - also constituted a major incentive to carry out this study. Indeed, it was a pivotal concern of the research objectives to clarify the impact of the new

[3] Indeed, even when developed along the lines of other theoretical frameworks, ethnographic and interpretative perspectives can hardly be seen as mere technical options for the gathering of data. By conceding the essentially social nature of the research process, and rejecting a rigid compartmentalisation of facts and meanings, these perspectives move onto an eminently epistemological plane.

SBM models on patterns of school access, local participation and social justice in Portugal.

Finally, I should explain that, in spite of the ethnographic roots and the use of ethnographic methods in my study, this research is not an "ethnography" in the classical sense of the term, i.e. an in-depth, long-term, participant observation of a single social setting , culture or group. Rather, it is a qualitative "collective case study" that , as I describe on pp. 75 ,76 and 77 , includes several different social settings and groups (parents, teachers, headteachers) . However , the conduct of my field work as well as in the analysis of the data and writing up of the dissertation does follow ethnographic procedures. Indeed, as is the case in ethnographic studies, I was the main research "instrument" of the study and I developed a "research design" involving a lengthy period of direct observations. I followed the everyday life of the schools under analysis for about three years , observing events and attending meetings, shadowing key actors, listening and asking questions, collecting documents, in order to throw light on the issues at the centre of the research. I built relationships with members of the communities to gain access to the most subtle elements of the culture, social relations and micropolitical activity. These relations were developed within a framework of personal and professional "respect" and "appreciation ". I also paid a great deal of attention to the individual actors' (and groups') perspectives and their interpretations of their world.

In analytical terms I refused the positivist appeal to the "discovery " of universal laws and instead, tried , through "thick descriptions ","to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular settings come to understand , to account for , to take action and otherwise manage their day -to -day situation" (Van Maanen ,1979, quoted in Miles &Huberman , 1994 ,p8).

In summary , while what follows is not 'an ethnography' as such, it does sit firmly within the tradition of qualitative research which draws on and uses ethnographic procedures, strives for "a holistic perspective" and "emic, etic, and non-judgmental views of reality" (Fetterman, 1998, p. 18).

Research Phases

Educational literature produced prior to the devolution policies offers contradictory images of primary schools as workplaces (Menter *et al*, 1997). Thus, while some studies portray this level of education as the *locus par excellence* of collaboration cultures, others denounce their "eggcrate" structure (see Lortie, 1975; Nias *et al*, 1989; Bush, 1997; Canário *et al*, 1997; Sarmento, 2000, Dias, 2002). This dichotomous and somewhat "schizophrenic" image of primary teaching constitutes a serious obstacle to any analysis of devolution policies. Indeed, in the absence of a minimally consistent frame of reference concerning the dynamics of primary schools during the phase prior to the reform, namely regarding the connections that would necessarily exist between the "traditional" and the "innovative" schools, the "changes" produced by the new managerial directives can only be substantiated on the basis of an *imaginary* antecedent. This imaginary antecedent may either be visualised as the "golden age" of professional autonomy and "service" ethic or, in the case of contemporary management perspectives, as the "dark age" of producer capture and bureaucratic inflexibility[4]. Given this situation, it seemed to be appropriate to divide my study into two main phases.

In the first phase, I would attempt to identify the main professional, organisational and political features of Portuguese primary schools during the final phase of *democratic management* (that is, the period immediately prior to the ratification of the new management model). Such a description would allow me to avail myself of a relatively trustworthy base of comparative references for subsequent study (a description of the impact of the "reform"). It would allow me, to evaluate the educational, organisational and social outcomes of the political reorientation that began to take shape in Portugal in the mid-eighties in the sphere of school administration (see Chapter 1). Indeed, research carried out

[4] In these circumstances, as pointed out by Menter *et al*, the very sanctioning of the new directives becomes a virtually indisputable political imperative. Indeed, it seems as natural to build collegiality in the "flat structures" of primary schools as to break down their professional isolation through teamwork (Menter *et al*, 1997).

in other countries has emphasised the fact that the transition from bureau-professional to neo-managerial regimes usually involves different stages (see Robertson, 1996).

The second phase of the study would be devoted to the description and analysis of the changes associated with the new regime of school autonomy in Portugal (Decree-law 115-A /98 and subsequent legislation). In line with the aims of the research, I would therefore attempt to pinpoint the main "first and second order" effects of the reform (Ball, 1994). I would then try to "evaluate" the *principal* outcomes of these changes: either paradigmatic convergence with neo-managerialist doctrines or "evolution in continuity" with regard to the centralising matrix of the Portuguese education system.

The Research Plan

The decisions involved in the field work are more than just a question of defining research strategies. The carrying out of any study requires several further decisions: the "research design", the definition of the sample; the negotiation of access and of the role of the researcher (especially in qualitative studies); and the identification of the main issues or themes of the research. While it is virtually impossible to elaborate on all these considerations in detail, I shall attempt, in this section, to give a concise outline of the procedures adopted in the course of the research.

A Collective Case Study

Research studies may take different forms. This study, as far as the "research design" is concerned, may be considered a (qualitative) collective case study (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Stake, 1995). Indeed, the central issue of this

research, together with its particular methodological approach, led me to consider the view that the use of case studies would be the best way of gaining access to the "uniqueness and the commonality"[5] of Portuguese primary schools:

- qualitative studies may be distinguished by their emphasis on holistic analysis of cases or phenomena (Stake, 1995).
- research in the domain of SBM has shown that the process of organisational change may depend on a large number of school variables (history, "ethos", leadership, students and parents' background)[6].

The data collection involved six schools. It is not, however, a question of six different case studies. Indeed, the type of work carried out comes within what Stake defined as a *collective (instrumental) case study:*

> [Sometimes] we need to know about a particular case. Here we have an intrinsic interest in the case, and we may call our work an *intrinsic case study.* In a different situation we will have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding (...) This use of the case is to understand something else. Case study here is instrumental to accomplish something other than understanding this particular [case], and we may call our inquiry *instrumental case study* (Stake, 1995, p3) .
>
> Researchers may study a number of cases jointly in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population or general condition. We might call it collective case study. It is not a study of a collective but an instrumental study extended to several cases (Stake, 1994, p237).

The choice of the different research venues (schools) was made bearing in mind some of the variables shown by previous research to be important for an analysis of SBM[7]. These, however, were not taken into consideration for the purpose of guaranteeing the representativeness of the study; given the nature of the investigation, it was above all an attempt to give credence to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question.

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[5] Stake, 1995, p1

[6] see Bowe *et al*, 1992, Osborn *et al*, 2002

[7] urban context; sociological composition of the school population; size and history of the school (see research field).

The selection of "cases"

Research into devolution policies has indicated that it is in urban areas that the issues central to the new management concepts assume greater importance (e.g. parent choice). I therefore decided to conduct my study in Lisbon, which is currently my place of residence.

Having taken this first decision, it was then necessary to reflect upon the organisational and sociological features of the schools that seemed best suited to be part of my "collective case study".

Given that the issue of equality of educational opportunity is pivotal in the controversy surrounding devolution policies, the inclusion of a range of socially and demographically different, schools became virtually inevitable (see Table 4). I therefore decided initially to bring together, in my study, one school with a predominantly middle and upper-middle class population (less than 10% disadvantaged pupils) and located in a neighbourhood with similar features); one school with a fairly disparate social mix, albeit with a considerable proportion of underprivileged pupils (between 30 and 50%); and one school in which disadvantaged pupils represented the only significant social class (over 90%).

I was also persuaded that the schools to be selected should be of different sizes. Two factors influenced this decision:

- the publication of a recent study on Portuguese primary education that showed that this variable had a bearing on the configuration of certain organisational dynamics (Borges *et al*, 1998).
- Portuguese legislation, which makes a considerable number of organisational aspects dependent on the size of the school (exemption of the headteacher from contact hours, constitution of school groupings etc.).

Given that a considerable number of schools fitted these criteria, I approached, with the aid of a study mentioned earlier in which I participated in a consultant capacity (Borges *et al*, 1998), those schools which seemed most likely to

"represent" the characteristic and issues I was hoping to study[8]. Thus it was that I selected the schools that I came to designate as Main School, Park School and Avenue School.

It was my intention that this "sample" should serve as the basis for both phases of the study. However, the long delay in the implementation of the new management model in schools with fewer than 300 pupils (small and medium in size), which particularly affected the greater Lisbon area, rendered this version of my project impracticable. Neither Park School nor Avenue School made the transition to the new management model within the established time-frame (school year 1999/2000). It was therefore essential to extend the initial sample to include a further three new schools in the second phase of the study (see Table 5).

Table 5 - Research Sample

School Features Research Phases	Large school /middle class	Medium school / Deprived Students	Small school /Deprived	Large school /Deprived
First phase	Main School	Park School	Avenue School	
Second phase	Main School Pessoa School		Magalhães School	Gama School

The schools will be described in detail in the last section of this chapter. The description include details on the history of the school/neighbourhood, number of teachers and pupils, teacher mobility, "leadership", departments and projects.

[8] that is, those which did not present, either at the organisational level (measured by the level of teacher) or at the pedagogic level (measured by the attitudes of teachers and pupils towards the

Negotiating Access

Since this was the first qualitative study I had undertaken, and since its execution involved a prolonged period of field work (three or four years), I was initially much concerned with the question of access to research locales. I therefore attempted to devise a "strategy" for negotiating access that would enable me to minimise the risks inherent therein. This strategy consisted of two basic procedures. First, I endeavoured to obtain the "meaningful" consent of all those who would be affected by the research. To this end, I invested considerable time and effort in a relatively complex procedure for gaining access. Apart from the normal personal and telephone contacts with the school management, to explain the objectives of the research, I also requested the permission of all the individual actors I intended to involve (parents, teachers, head teachers, ancillary staff). It was not merely a question of a formal request, although this was also made. I made a point of attending meetings of the various organs of the school, to present the project, explain the kind of cooperation I needed, and take any questions. I also requested that the decision regarding the school's participation in the project should not be taken in my presence, as this might have influenced the discussion and the outcome. Although this involved a lengthy process, and increased the risk of refusal, it offered, in my opinion, various advantages. In the first instance, it prevented the study from being seen as a result of a decision taken unilaterally by any one sector of the school (management, teachers or parents)[9]. Secondly, it reduced the risk of the researcher role being confused with that of an institutional evaluator[10]. In addition, it seemed to me essential to negotiate an *informed* consent, given the theoretical (critical sociology) and methodological (ethnography) assumptions underlying the research.

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participation of the latter) significant differences when compared to others schools of similar size and sociological composition.

[9] This risk could cause serious problems to the research development, due to the expected period of turmoil related with the new policies.

[10] this was one of the points I emphasised in my presentation.

Areas of Analysis

The definition of the main theme of this research, derived from a review of the literature that informed it and my own concerns and interests, made it possible to establish certain boundaries for the carrying out of the study, namely to identify areas of potential "convergence" between countries in the domain of devolution policies (see Chapter 1). This is, moreover, the function of theory in qualitative studies:

> in qualitative inquiry the theory is used to focus the inquiry and give it boundaries for comparison in facilitating the development of the theoretical or conceptual outcomes. The theory or concept of interest may be considered a conceptual template with which to compare and contrast results, rather than to use as a priori categories into which to force the analysis (Morse, 1994, p223).

In fact, it was the empirical research, together with the dynamics of the actual reform process, that made it possible to transform these naturally very broad and diffuse boundaries into areas of effective study. There thus emerged, in the course of the research, four main areas of analysis:

Teachers' identity, conceptions of professionalism and working conditions

In this area, consideration was given to changes relating to the professional ethic and identity matrix of the teachers ("bureau-professionalism", "new professionalism", "market ethic"); to patterns of collegiality in primary schools (restricted and extended professionalism, autonomy versus constraint); to the intensification and supervision of teachers' work; and to the school hierarchies (see, especially, Chapters 4 & 6).

Headteachers' roles and responsibilities

In this area issues were analysed relating to the change in the duties of school executives, to the role of the headteacher in the implementation of the new SBM model, to the differentiation in duties and status between managers and

teachers, and to the profusion of forms of middle management in primary schools. Particular attention was paid, in line with the objectives of the research, to the role played by school managers in the internalising of neo-managerial regimes (see, especially, Chapters 4 & 5).

Parental and community participation in schools

This area was dedicated to aspects associated with the different models of parental involvement and participation in the schools, with the blurring of the frontiers between the public and private sectors, with the role of local government in school management, and with the impact of devolution policies on the democratisation of Portuguese primary teaching (in terms of equality of access, achievement and participation).

Patterns of interaction between the central administration and the schools

This area essentially involved consideration of the issues of (re)centralisation and decentralisation of decisions and changes in forms of governance and control of education. Also analysed was the role played by the central administration in the implementation of the new SBM model and the model of participation by local actors which prevailed throughout the transition from "democratic management" to "school autonomy" in Portugal.

The concepts and perspectives pivotal to the treatment of these areas of analysis are summarised at the beginning of each chapter (see Parts 2 & 3 of this thesis) and, where applicable, amplified in the course of same. It was not intended, however, as has already been mentioned, that these summaries should constitute a "script" for empirical research. The intention was purely to contextualise and provide a comparative base for the research.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The carrying out of a qualitative study involves complex processes of selection of events, building relations, finding informants and contexts; and these only fall into a definite pattern as the research itself evolves. Researchers have constantly to make decisions as to when, where, what and whom they should observe (Burgess, 1997). In this section I shall consider some of these processes, the role(s) I played in the course of the research and the methods I used for gathering and then analysing the data.

The early months of observation: immersion and "submersion"

My experience as a sociologist alerted me to the complexity of fieldwork, given the multifaceted nature of any social situation: space, actors, activities, objects, timings, events, feelings (Spradley, 1980). The strategy defined for gaining access allowed me some initial limitation of the "field", especially in terms of the spaces and activities "available" for observation (plenary meetings, head teachers' office, group activities). But in spite of this delimitation, I still had great difficulty in the early months in focusing the research. I took copious notes about everything, especially the meetings I attended: I made plans of the rooms, plotting how the actors arranged themselves at each meeting; I collected agendas; I documented controversies and dramas; I timed the meetings and the discussions of each topic; I described interactions, means of disseminating information and the way decisions were made. It was a fascinating time, but excessively time-consuming. I was excited about the observation, and stayed on in the schools far longer than I intended (in the sense of striking a balance between observation, registration and reflection). As a result, I would stay up until late into the night, scribbling my fieldnotes almost compulsively. Even when patterns began to repeat themselves, I would still write everything down.

However, in the end this time was not wasted: I realize now that a major part of the material that enabled me to reflect on the "identity" of Portuguese schools was the result of ideas that came to me during this period. The almost exclusive role of observer that I assumed at the time helped to put the teachers at ease in my company and to make them feel that I belonged. I for my part, albeit slowly, gained confidence in my role as "ethnographer" and adopted a more reflective attitude towards the carrying out of the research.

Choice of Research contexts

The choice of cases to include in the current research was made, as I mentioned above, in the light the research goals. The choice of actual research locales, however, goes far beyond the constitution of the study sample. Schools are complex institutions, comprising many formal and informal "subdivisions", and this makes the choice of contexts for institutional observation something which can have a decisive influence on the gathering of data (Strauss *et al*, 1964; Hammersley, 1981).

The criteria chosen for the negotiation of access and the technical management of the research led me, as already indicated, to favour the observation of meetings and other group activities. I then gradually extended my field of observation to the teachers' room, director's office, "Board of parents" meetings and informal meeting places for teachers (corridors, dingy areas in the case of the P3 schools, entrances and exits). As the research progressed, and taking care not to neglect the analysis of other contexts (see Chapter 4, "human relations"), I eventually focused my attention on the director's office and on meetings of the various organs of the school (including the parents' association and organs of middle management). This choice was made both as a result of theoretical questions relating to the issue of neo-managerialism (see Chapter 1) and of the marked segmentation identified in the first phase of the research (see Chapter 3).

In spite of the fact that from the first year of the research I had been given virtually unlimited access to the director's office, especially at Main School, I

made a point of not being present at meetings between the director and parents when it seemed that delicate personal matters or educational conflicts were under discussion. In these cases I chose, on a later occasion, to conduct short interviews with those involved. I tried in this way to strike a balance between accessibility and intrusion, two of the principles which should always inform the choice of social situations for research (Spradley, 1981).

It should be stressed that, although the objects of analysis were to all intents and purposes the same in the different schools, the actual physical features of these schools, as also their different practices, determined literally the perspective of observation. For example, the "open space" design of Main School, unlike other schools, meant that an excellent vantage point was afforded by the area adjoining the director's office[11]. Moreover, in the smaller schools, where the head teacher also had a full teaching timetable, the director's office played a relatively minor role. Where it existed, it might be used as a staffroom (Avenue School) or special resources room (Magalhães School) or given over to the head teacher's own classroom (Park School). The selection of research locales is therefore more complex than it might at first appear. Furthermore, as Burgess (1997), points out, one rarely finds a school that combines simplicity, accessibility and non-intrusion. In the current research, I was particularly aware of the issue of non-intrusion. For example, it was impossible to tell in advance when a conversation between a director and parents or teachers would develop into a serious argument or turn to intimate family matters.

The Role of Researcher and the Handling of Relations

The role of the researcher in field work has been variously described: active or passive; overt or covert; participant or observer (see Burgess, 1997). It was my intention to adopt a stance roughly halfway between observer and participant,

[11] In some cases I managed to find alternatives, like the open-air patio of Magalhães School, or the ante-room in Pessoa School (which doubled as the Teachers' Room), from which to gain a broader view.

with the emphasis on the former. This choice was made for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it would be difficult to play the role of participant, given that I was not a qualified primary teacher, and voluntary work is not common in Portuguese primary schools. Second, I considered I had insufficient experience in the domain of field research to play the parts, simultaneously and in a variety of situations, of both researcher and participant.

Finally, the role of observer-participant seemed to me the best suited to the objectives and methodology of the research.

While my procedure was largely consistent with the role I had chosen, I was obliged on occasion to recognize what some authors had already pointed out, namely that different roles are assumed at different phases of the research. For example, some meetings were tape recorded for me by teachers when I was away in London and, once a certain relationship had been established with local actors, I began receiving telephone calls telling me about unscheduled activities which they thought might be of interest for the research (in this way the "objects" of my study took the role of co-authors). Furthermore, school managers would often take me into their confidence concerning the "dramas" that occurred in their schools, suggesting in some cases that this helped them to (re)think their strategy. From this perspective, even in the role of listener, I became a participant. This even occurred in certain interviews, in which teachers would make comments such as, "That's funny - I'd never thought of that before" or "It's only now that I realize we've been evaluating our pupils on the basis of the previous year's school project".

There were times, especially during the difficult phase experienced by some managers and teachers during the transition from the old to the new model, when I was confronted with serious ethical problems arising from my role as listener. It was difficult to draw a clear line between what was said in confidence, as a result of a period of great personal and professional insecurity[12], and what constituted part of the research. It was also difficult to

[12] Besides the professional problems mentioned in the second phase of the research, Rita also had to deal with serious health problems and the death of her husband.

remain silent when people shared with me plans for action that seemed likely to me to aggravate existing problems.

It was with regard to the handling of these relations and situations that the field diary was invaluable throughout the research (apart from helping me to overcome my initial diffidence in contacting the schools and in defining the actual areas of analysis).

Conduct of interviews and selection of informants

The interviews

The conducting of the interviews represented an important turning point in the research. In the first place it allowed me to gain a far deeper insight into the universe inhabited by the actors in the study (teachers, managers, parents). And this is one of the main purposes underlying interpretative studies: "the main aims of participant observers revolve around giving meaning to the universe they are studying through the perspective of those that are being studied" (Denzin, 1989, quoted in Vasconcelos, 2000, p189). Secondly, it was above all after conducting the interviews that I felt that "entry" into the schools had given way to "access" (see Ball, 1990). Indeed, as the teachers were interviewed, so they clearly became much more comfortable with the social relationship that had been created, and even played a significant role in the research itself: they warned me of alterations to the dates of regular events, or told me about incidents I had not witnessed myself.

This change in the teachers' attitudes, although indissolubly linked with the social nature of the interviews themselves, would also seem to be the result of being helped to see the object of the research in a fresh light. Indeed, teachers would often begin their interview with the opening gambit "I really don't know much about this management business". The realization that management, in this case, referred to their daily practices in the school, rather than to the red tape to which they were accustomed, greatly enhanced their self-confidence. The lengthy period of observation prior to the interviews also contributed decisively to their successful outcome. Indeed, my role as empathic listener was

not merely a pose. Having observed the world of parents, teachers and managers, I was genuinely keen to gain a deeper understanding of issues relating to this universe. The importance I attached to the interviews led me to avoid booking "meetings" for times when the teachers were tired (breaks, lunchtime) or that might clash with other activities (times for receiving parents; the interval prior to meetings; periods when pupils were working on their own). Although this decision obliged me to make extra visits to the schools, this practice paid "dividends". Indeed, since the interviews were of an ethnographic nature, mutual availability was essential.

Technically speaking, I observed the normal procedures for conducting interviews: I negotiated times (average length 1hr. 30mins); venues (almost always classrooms outside teaching hours) and ways of documenting the event (audio recordings, except in two cases). I explained the purpose of the interview and guaranteed complete confidentiality. I never used a script, although my opening questions invariably followed the same pattern (How many years have you been a teacher/manager? What made you choose this profession?; Why did you apply to this particular school?). These questions were essentially aimed at putting the interviewees at their ease.

From this point, the interview would essentially turn into a conversation focusing on the research objectives and issues that had emerged during the initial process of observation and data analysis (such as teachers' identity and conceptions of professionalism, patterns of "collegiality" among teachers, headteachers' role, parental involvement; see *research areas*). Added to these questions, in the second phase of the research, were issues related to the implementation of the new management model (information, forms and level of participation, policy effects).

Selection of Informants

The selection of informants, which had initially been one of my chief concerns, actually turned out to be easier than I had anticipated. The great mobility of teachers in Portuguese schools made the whole selection process almost

automatic: few teachers remained in schools during the whole period of the research. Nonetheless, I made a point, each academic year, of interviewing some of the teachers who were new to the schools included in the sample. Above all, I was careful not to lose sight of the various sensibilities to be found in the schools. Maybe as a result of this, I rarely felt in the course of the interviews that the interviewees were withholding information (either for fear that I would be judgmental or because of my relationship with other groups). There was only one teacher who declined to grant me an "interview" (recording or notes), although she had revealed her thoughts on a variety of topics in "conversation".

Data Analysis

Because the field work was conducted over more than three years - from the beginning of 1999 until March 2002 - I was able to gather an extremely large number of interviews and records (see Table 6).

Table 6 - Field work

	Main School	Park School	Avenue School	Pessoa School	Gama School	Magalhães School	Total
Interviews (teachers)	46	12	3	18	21	5	105
Interviews headteachers and deputy heads	12	4	2	4	6	3	23
Formal* Meetings	32**	9	3	14	8	6	72

* note including parents' meetings

**the differences in the number of meetings reflect both the school dynamics and the duration of the research (higher in Main school since the school belonged to both phases of the research)

The fact that the project was partially subsidized served to lighten the administrative tasks associated with the research (transcription of interviews, typing of field notes, acquisition of the Nud'ist programme to ease the process of data analysis, cost of translation). I was thus able to concentrate on the organisation and analysis of the data gathered.

My initial approach to the texts and contexts, although not totally by intention, coincides to a certain extent with some of the postulates of "interpretativism" (Miles & Huberman, 1994): quest for a deep understanding of group actions and interactions, slow condensing of field notes, continued readings of the source material. Indeed, contrary to some authors who, already in the early stages of research, are able to conduct initial processes of codification (see Vasconcelos, 1997), I relied for a long time on the "integrity" of my records. The paucity of ethnographic research on primary education in Portugal led me to "put off" the process of coding, in the hope of ensuring meanwhile that the material on which I would be basing this coding would have a certain "representativeness". Moreover, even in the very advanced stages of the research, I would frequently go back to my documents, especially the interviews, for inspiration and "confirmation" of hypotheses and inferences (which is why the interviews are a vital part of my references).

The methods used for data analysis were those suggested for this kind of study: initial data is collected, written up and reviewed line by line; categories or labels are generated, and a list of them grows; the labels are reviewed and typically a more abstract category is attributed to several incidents or observations. (Huberman, 1994).

This process, **exemplified** in Table 7, led me to define the research areas previously mentioned: teachers' identity, conceptions of professionalism and working conditions; headteachers' roles and responsibilities; parental and community participation in schools; patterns of interaction between the central administration and the schools.

The writing process was crucial in all the stages of the research: compiling filed notes and memos, coding and categorising, focusing the study, dealing with personal and research dilemmas with the help of my field "diary", drawing up reports, drafting chapters. In fact, in qualitative studies "analysis is not the last phase of the research: it is concurrent with data collection or cyclic" (Ely *et al*, 1997, p165). As a consequence, "living by words" is a fundamental part of the (qualitative) research process (Ely *et al*, 1997). The product of this process is, I hope, "a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the images of the research, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, pp2-3)

The Research Process: validity and limitations

The difficulties I experienced, particularly at the outset of the field work and the data analysis, are a clear illustration of one of the limitations of this research: the ones that stemmed from my own inexperience in research of this kind. Furthermore, being an individual research project, other variables will inevitably have affected the outcome (my age, sex, profession, personality, social status).

The workings of politics in Portugal, which forced me into a redefinition of the sample as well as uncertainty as to the advance of the reform process, brought to the research an element of tension that I had not anticipated. I not only had to partially redefine the study, but also to increase considerably the amount of fieldwork (by including three new schools to ensure "representativeness" in the second phase of the research).

This period of redefinition was in fact the hardest part of the whole process (June 1999 to January 2000). Although it was a gruelling experience, it at least helped me to acquire a more flexible attitude to the process, something which had been missing in my previous research experience. And this outlook is fundamental in qualitative approaches, given that they imply "flexibility in dealing with theoretical and substantive issues" (Burgess, 1997, p157).

The triangulation process

If flexibility is the "duty" of the field researcher, it should not be construed as the opposite of meticulousness; indeed, it often constitutes a prerequisite of same. In addition, the validity of a qualitative study should be measured by other means, and not by scrupulous adherence to a predefined research plan. The presence of multiple research strategies constitutes an important requisite in this respect, since "a hypothesis should stand up to confrontation with a series of complementary methods that allow it to be tested" (Webb *et al*, 1966, quoted in Burgess, 1997, p158).

In the current research, four main forms of triangulation were used (see Denzin, 1979, 1994). In the first place, "theoretical triangulation" was present in the attention paid to the various theoretical perspectives regarding the issue of SBM (see Chapter 1). Secondly, "spatial triangulation" which led me to conduct a "collective case study" based on schools with different sociological and organisational characteristics. Third, "methodological triangulation" simultaneously embraced "intra-method"[13] and "inter-method" triangulation. In this latter respect, emphasis should be given to the parts played both by the ethnographic interviews and by participant observation. Mention should also be made of the complementary role played by documentary analysis (projects, plans, minutes, school regulations) and the comparison with surveys recently conducted and which touched on the issues under analysis (Borges *et al*, 1998; Barroso, 2001; see Chapters 4 & 5)[14].

Finally, the great candour displayed by the overwhelming majority of the actors involved allowed for triangulation of the levels of analysis (individual, group, interaction between groups and collective).

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[13] The length of the project made it possible to interview teachers twice, in the majority of the schools included in the study.

[14] In the first part of the study a comparison was made between data obtained and those of a survey conducted by the Lisbon Municipality (who kindly granted me access to their findings for use in the current research (see Chapter 4). In the second phase, although there was no longer this possibility, I paid special attention to the results.

All these various aspects combined to underpin my confidence in the research. However, I cannot but stress the endless hours I spent, over almost four years, "watching, asking or examining" (Wolcott, 1992); that is, attempting to gain a "holistic" (systemic), encompassing, integrated overview of the context under study: "its logic, its arrangements, its implicit and explicit rules" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p6). Indeed, it is precisely this intense and prolonged contact with a "field" or life situation that is a distinctive feature of studies of an interpretative matrix:

> [As an ethnographer I am anxious to learn] to be an "astronaut of slowness", living at a different pace and placing emphasis on the social grace, the time and the rhythms that modulate the dance of life (Vasconcelos, 2002, pp54-55).

Study Sample

As explained previously, this study involved the participation of six schools, the main features of which I shall now describe (see table 7 and 8). The data presented refers, in the case of all the schools, to the first year of the research (1998).

Table 8 - Description of the Sample (First phase)

School Population	Main School	Park School	Avenue School
Nº of students	386	270	48
Social Background	Upper Middle class	Heterogeneous (129 underpriviliged)	Underpriviliged
Catchment Area	Homogeneous (school neighbourhood)	Heterogeneous (school neighbourhood and peripheral districts)	Homogeneous (school neighbourhood)
Location of the school	Limit of the city (area of recent development)	Limit of the city (traditional neighbourhood)	Centre of the city (historic neighbourhood)

Inset 1 - MAIN SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - With over 350 pupils and 20 teachers, this school qualifies for inclusion in the largest group in the Lisbon area[15]. It is located in a sociologically homogeneous, young neighbourhood which is predominantly middle and upper class (around 60% of the population are holders of degrees). There is only a small number of disadvantaged pupils (7%) as a result of the *daytime* presence in the district of service-industry workers (home help and other unqualified workers).

Stability of management and teaching staff - The group currently running the school has been directly or indirectly involved in its management since the early nineties. Moreover Rita, first as director and then as president of the executive board, has been the head of the school for six years. In contrast with the stability of management, the school has experienced considerable mobility among the teachers as a result of the growth of the school, the retirement of some senior teachers and family conflicts.

History of the school - The school has a good reputation both in the district and in the educational community, and has operated for many years as a venue for teacher probation and research for various training colleges (universities and polytechnics). Teachers and directors highlight the process of internal change that has taken place since the late eighties. This process is based on a new kind of leadership, the development of project work in the school and an increasing partnership with the families (mainly through the parents' association).

Support services and extra-curricular activities - The school has a canteen and an LTA programme offering a wide variety of extra-curricular activities (English, swimming, dance, I.T., judo, etc). These are paid for and contracted out by the parents.

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Inset 2 - PARK SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - With around 270 pupils and a dozen teachers, Park School is considered a medium-size school for the greater Lisbon area. Located in a middle class area, Park School is nevertheless a socially heterogeneous school. In fact, its population comprises a mix of children with family links to the neighbourhood (many of their grandparents number among members of an elderly local population) and some disadvantaged pupils. These latter come from run-down parts of the district and its immediate environs (the school is close to one of the main access roads into Lisbon). The existence of various well-known private schools in the area also means that Park School is less sought-after by the more privileged classes.

History of the school - Park School, in contrast with other schools in this study, was relatively unaffected by the neo-managerial directives that began to emerge in Portugal in the late eighties. Its low profile during the change process would seem to be due to three main factors: a stable teaching staff, relatively advanced in years; an absence of non-teaching directors, and little influence exerted by the families. The school is rarely approached by teacher training colleges, but is of some interest to companies (due to its size and middle class component).

Stability of management and teaching staff - The school is predominantly staffed by senior and associate teachers who have been there for many years. The director was new to the post but had acted for years as deputy director. He was one of the group of senior teachers in the school.

Support services and extra-curricular activities - The school had an LTA programme run by the local community centre, which "supervised the children" but organized no cultural or sporting activities. There had been attempts to set up a lunch service and a more educationally focused LTA, but these attempts had met with little success.

Inset 3 - AVENUE SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - At Avenue School, there were two teachers in charge of about 50 pupils. Located in the historic centre of

the city, it caters to a highly disadvantaged population from a neighbouring district. In spite of the fact that around 95% are classified as deprived, poverty is not the only problem with which pupils have to contend. They live in a highly stigmatised area in which activities associated with the so-called "underground economy" are openly practised: prostitution, the presence of illegal immigrants, drugs.

Stability of management and teaching staff - Two teachers have been working in the school for a number of years, one of whom acts as director.

Schools included in the second phase of the study.

Table 9 - Study Sample (Second Phase)

School Population	Main School	Pessoa School	Gama School	Magalhães School
Nº of students	386	397	356	48
Social Background	Upper Middle class	Middle/upper Middle	Lower classes	Mixed
Catchment Area	school neighbourhood	One-third from the outside	school neighbourhood	school neighbourhood
Location of the school	Limit of the city (area of recent development)	Central	Central	Limit of the city

Inset 4 - MAIN SCHOOL (see inset 1)

Inset 5 - PESSOA SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - Pessoa School has many features in common with Main School (size, socio-economic level of the population, history, school departments). However, it is located in a district

with a much older population which, unlike that of Main School, is therefore in decline. This decline has nonetheless been gradual, because the school is in demand from certain sectors of the middle class who, though themselves living in less wealthy areas, desire a school with a certain *cachet* for their children.

Stability of management and teaching staff - The school's negative growth means that it has not been particularly affected by the issue of professional mobility. However it has, in recent years, had problems with its management. The departure of a former director who had run the school for many years left a problem of succession that is still to be resolved. Demographic regression, together with management problems, has helped to tarnish the public image of the school.

History of the school - Throughout the eighties, Park School was considered to be one of the finest state schools in the city of Lisbon, as well as one of the most innovative, with its extra-curricular activities and logistic support structures (mainly under the aegis of the parents' association).

Inset 6 – GAMA SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - Located in the same district as Park School and of a similar size (over 350 pupils), Gama School caters, however, to a very different school population. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils from ethnic minorities, especially Indian, are strongly represented in this school. The existence of various shanty-towns nearby - in the process of being demolished towards the end of the research - accounts for this atypical phenomenon in one of the city's wealthier suburbs.

Stability of management and teaching staff -The school had the same director for more than a decade (she retired unexpectedly at the end of the research, for the reasons described in Chapter 5), and had a fairly stable teaching staff during the same period. As some of these teachers gradually retired, a small group of young teachers joined the school, many of them just out of training college.

School history and services - During the nineties, the school was the centre for various projects focusing on multicultural education and links between school

and community. It thus acquired a certain prominence, if only within the scientific community. Although this was later lost, the school retained some of its special features (LTA run by the school, I.T. classes and the occasional English course). In the last national evaluation to be conducted on the school, it came out extremely well; the middle classes in the area turn almost exclusively to Gama School.

Inset 7- MAGALHÃES SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - At Magalhães School, there were four teachers in charge of about 48 pupils (including the special needs teacher). Located out of the centre of the city, Magalhães School caters to a highly disadvantaged population (around 40% classified as deprived). Pupils from several ethnic minorities, near fifteen, were represented in this school. The school lived a process of desperate need for survival (small size, strong presence of ethnic minorities)

Support services and extra-curricular activities - The school had an LTA programme run by the local community centre, which "supervised the children" but organized few cultural or sporting activities. There had been attempts to set up a lunch service but with limited success (contracting out of highly expensive services)

Stability of management and teaching staff - Two teachers have been working in the school for a number of years, one of whom acts as director.

PART II

THE "DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT" OF PORTUGUESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

CHAPTER THREE
PATTERNS OF COLLEGIALITY IN PORTUGUESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Central to this chapter will be the analysis of the patterns of "collegiality", predominant in Portuguese education at the time of the formal sanctioning of school autonomy (1998). The chapter consists of four sections. In the first section I shall analyse certain questions relating to the contemporary debate on the issue of "collegiality". I shall then proceed to an analysis of aspects relevant to an understanding of relations between colleagues in Portuguese primary schools: teachers' professional and organisational identity (section 2); professional relations between colleagues (section 3); patterns of institutional participation (section 4) and human relations between colleagues (section 5).

The analysis of peer interaction in Portuguese primary schools will be carried out in accordance with a very broad definition of collegiality: 'forms of social and professional interaction established between people who share the same activity in a particular place of work'. This methodological option does not derive exclusively from the conflict surrounding the area under analysis. It stems largely from the paucity of ethnographic studies concerning Portuguese primary schools. The limited nature of the research into primary teaching in Portugal renders inadvisable the premature closure of the field of analysis which would inevitably result from the *a priori* adoption of any one model of organisational analysis (rational, cultural, political, systemic).

It should be remembered that this phase of the research, and this part of the dissertation, correspond to the end of the *democratic management of schools* (1998). This was a complex period, conspicuous both for the secular traditions of Portuguese state education (centralization) and for the emergence, with the 1986 educational reform, of concepts and practices closer to neo-managerialist and neo-liberal concepts. This dynamic of continuity and change heralds the end of the school as *"local service of the State"* in Portugal and paves the way for the more substantial changes in school organisation (to be analysed in Part III of

the dissertation). The process of change is, in fact, visible in each of the phases under consideration, although these in themselves constitute important landmarks in the evolution of Portuguese school administration.

Patterns of Collegiality

Contemporary educational literature gives pride of place to the term 'collegiality', due to the great potential which it is seen to represent: a key factor in the personal and professional development of the teachers (Schon, 1983), a distinctive feature of efficient schools (Mortimore *et al*, 1989), a strategy for school improvement (Harris *et al*, 1997), a symbol of the new post-Fordist organisations ("flatter" structures"), a facilitator of innovation and processes of change (Fullan, 1999). The need to justify politically the adoption of school-centred management models has likewise contributed to virtually unlimited expectations being invested in peer relations:

> The expectation that any interaction that breaks the isolation of teachers will contribute in some fashion to the knowledge, skill, judgement, or commitment that individuals bring to their work, and will enhance the collective capacity of groups and institutions (Little, 1990, p219).

In spite of the political and educational importance it assumed in the eighties and nineties, as a consequence of generalised policies of 'devolution', the term 'collegiality' has to a great extent remained 'conceptually amorphous and ideologically sanguine' (op cit, p229). The exponential growth-rate of literature on the subject of SMB has failed to establish a precise description of the set of structures, aspirations and practices which go to make up the term 'collegiality' (Hargreaves, 1998). The most popular image of collegiate relations continues to be that of "a group of teachers working together in a cohesive school culture" (Timberley & Robinson, 1998, p608). The term 'collegiality' has thus remained essentially inseparable from an image of consensus, of a shared culture. In other words it has remained closely bound up with the functionalist and structural

functionalist tradition that predominated for decades in cultural and organisational studies.

This perspective on collegiality has been strongly criticised. Opposition involves, in the first place, the prescriptive nature of the collegial models: "those who advocate collegiality do so on the basis of prescription rather than description" (Campbell and Southworth, 1993, p112). Indeed support of the new professionalism often resembles a statement of faith. Reiteration of the principles is a substitute for analysis of the difficulties and contradictions inherent in the process.

> At its core, the new professionalism involves a movement away from the teacher's professional authority and autonomy towards *new forms of relationships with colleagues,* with students and with parents. These relationships are becoming *closer* as well as more *intensive* and *collaborative,* involving more explicit negotiation of roles and responsibilities. The conventional classroom focus *of teachers' work is now set within a framework of whole -school policies, and the planning and implementation of agreed priorities* (Hargreaves, D. 1994, p427, my emphasis).

However, empirical research has also shown that the pattern of relationships between colleagues is extremely complex and involves the co-existence of elements conducive to both professional isolation and team spirit:

> the cellular form of school organisation, and the attendant time and space ecology, puts interactions between the teachers at the margin of their daily work. Individualism characterises their socialisation; teachers do not share a powerful technical culture. The major psychic rewards of teachers are earned in isolation from peers, and they can hamper one another by intruding on class boundaries (...) But other observations should alert us against a too casual view of the significance of peer relationships. (...) We found earlier that teachers see each other as the primary source of useful ideas; we also noted that some elementary teachers assess their progress by comparing it with that of other teachers (...) One might expect some tension, therefore, between the impulse toward distance and the need for proximity, between the wish for boundness and the search for assistance (Lortie, 1975, pp192-193).

The apparent contradiction between a quest for both proximity and distance was also stressed by Little (1990)[2] and by the authors that consider the teaching profession to be at the same time a highly autonomous and a highly cooperative profession (Easton, 1994; Woods *et al*, 1997).

It could be argued that the "persistence of privacy" among teachers is solely a reflection of the bureau-Fordist matrix that has governed their work. Meanwhile, some authors have contended that the difficulties surrounding the implementation of collegiate models in schools are rooted in deeper issues concerning the nature of the teaching profession and the structure of the school institution itself. In fact, the teacher's work has been compared to that of an artisan, requiring great skills in managing group dynamics and in improvising in an ever-changing scenario (Lieberman, 1988; Huberman, 1993)[3]. In this respect it seems ill-suited to the complex systems of planning, implementing and assessment which are set out as a paradigm of collegiality in the specialist literature [4].

Besides this, organisational perspectives based on collegiate models omit the fact that these are "loose-coupled organisations" (Weick, 1976) imbued with a wide variety of aims that are not infrequently contradictory. "The structure of the schools allows for and reproduces dissensus and goal diversity" (Ball, 1987, p11). In this respect, despite being the target of markedly normative discourses, educational institutions are in reality great hives of micro-political activity (Hoyle, 1988; Blase, 1991; Gonzalez, 1998, 2002). Even apparently consensual situations, as pointed out by Thuler in his descriptions of the "great family", may obfuscate serious conflicts. "There are things that people prefer to keep to themselves, rather than speak out" (Thuler, 1994, p31).

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[2] when she drew a distinction between forms of sharing which allow teachers to maintain a considerable degree of autonomy and privacy (story-telling, sharing of ideas, aid and assistance) and those which imply interdependence and anticipate real forms of collective action ("joint work").

[3] Cooperation among teachers has also been described as voluntary, spontaneous and unpredictable (Hargreaves, 1998).

[4] See Chapter One

A second line of criticism involves the lack of historical and political foundations for collegiate models, including their claim for universal application and effectiveness. In fact, studies in the field of comparative education reveal that conceptions about teacher professionalism are influenced by the cultural, political and administrative traditions of the respective countries (Broadfoot *et al*, 1993; Novoa, 1998). In more centralized countries, for example, patterns of restricted professionalism would appear to be more common (Bardisa, 1995; Sharp, 1997; Planel, 1997). These results show that professional practices are, at least to some extent, tied to the social contexts in which they operate.

In these circumstances, I cannot but emphasise the contradiction that exists between the arguments put forward to justify the need for collegiate models and the virtues attributed to them:

> [Teacher collaboration], an educational concept that has been around for a long time is enjoying its new-found popularity precisely at a time of massive international reform and restructuring of schools aimed at ensuring that schools more efficiently and effectively satisfy national economic priorities (Smyth, 1991, p324).

In times of "aggressive" globalisation and strong international competition, it would seem futile to wait for the internal workings of organisations to be ruled by values and practices radically at odds with societal orientations. Moreover, social and political issues are generally regarded by the new managerial perspectives to be essentially technical problems

> It is ironic that, at a time when social disadvantage appears to be increasing in Britain, school effectiveness theory places less emphasis on poverty, deprivation and social exclusion, and more emphasis on organisational factors (Morley & Rassol, 1999, p6; see also Chapter 1).

Some authors even stress other difficulties inherent in the dominant concepts of collegiality:

- the difficulty in maintaining, either theoretically or politically, that any kind of society or organisation can (or should) be governed exclusively by universally approved norms;
- the ambiguity which surrounds the concept of collegiality and which makes it include virtually everything, from informal chats between teachers to whole school planning and action research (Hargreaves, 1991);
- the existence of types of collegiality which may favour the exercise of organisational power by managers and administrators (Corbett, 1991; Ball, 1994).

The importance given to organisational factors is another feature of neo-managerial concepts that has been widely criticized (Clark & Newman, 1997). Indeed, early studies concerning teacher cultures concentrated on the need for a *technical* culture shared amongst teachers (Lortie, 1975) or, more recently, on the advantages to be derived from the development of a community of 'reflective practices' (Stenhouse, 1979; Schon, 1983; Nias *et al*, 1989). Pedagogy was at the centre of these visions of collegiality.

Nowadays, there is a marked tendency to identify collegiate practices with the organisational dimensions of the school and with the development of whole-school policies which find their expression in documents and platforms for local action and evaluation (school projects, regulations).

This change of references should not be underestimated. Sergiovanni (1997), for example, by making the distinction between organisation and community, clearly illustrates the power of metaphor and the risks involved in over-emphasising the organisational dimension:

> Life in organisations and life in communities are different in both quality and kind. In communities, we create our social lives with others who have intentions similar to ours. In organisations, relationships are constructed for us by others and become codified into a system of hierarchies, roles and role expectations. Communities too are confronted with issues of control. But instead of relying on external control, communities rely more on norms, purposes, values, professional socialization, collegiality and natural interdependence. (...) The

> ties of community also redefine how certain ideas are to be understood (...) Collegiality in organizations results from organisational arrangements (variations of team teaching, for example) that force people to work together and form the team building skills of principals. In communities, collegiality comes from within. Community members are connected to each other because of felt interdependencies, mutual obligations, and other emotional and normative ties (Sergiovanni, 1997, 233).

It therefore comes as no surprise that whole-school policies are seen by many teachers as a process of contrived collegiality (Hargreaves, 1998).

The new models of collegiality would seem, therefore, to have the perverse effect of repudiating the traditional teacher practices of "authentic collaboration":

> This planned, deliberative, mastery-oriented learning milieu would appear to be hostile to the growth of the spontaneous, development-oriented and unpredictable relationships that Nias *et al* (1989) and Hargreaves (1990) assert are at the heart of authentic teacher collaboration. More fundamentally, the relationships described by Nias and Hargreaves may have become anachronistic, even "unprofessional" in a post -Fordist workplace (Smyth *et al*, 2000, p85).

The potential for genuine collaboration and professional autonomy becomes caught in the web of dependences produced by the new management models: central evaluation, choice, parent participation, "transformational" leadership (see Chapter 1). This is why many authors suggest that public discourse on collegiality and partnership serves basically to obfuscate a process of profound change in patterns of social regulation and to facilitate the penetration of the morally and politically "neutral" ideology of management (Smyth at al, 2000; see also Chapter 1).

The emphasis on organisational identity and autonomy, central features of the new collegiate models, may also be seen to constitute a significant part of the hidden curriculum of marketized relations. Indeed, the primacy of the organisation implies "a move away from a publicly provided system of state schooling towards individual schools competing in the market place" (Whitty, 2002, p87). In addition, the importance attached to the organisational dimension

will reduce the possibility of collective struggles (Whitty, 1996, 2002) and pave the way for adaptation to the new enterprise cultures (Kenway, 1993; Smyth, 1999).

It would be impossible to take up all of the issues identified above in this Chapter, but I will address some of the main theoretical issues underlying the problems of collegiality and SBM, focusing in particular on:

- the professional and organisational values prevailing in Portuguese primary schools (market, public service ethic, community participation);
- the stance taken by Portuguese primary teachers with regard to the ideas of new professionalism, corporate culture and 'new managerialism';
- the nature of professional and social relationship predominating in primary schools.

Professional and Organisational Identity

The traditional identity of teachers, in particular primary teachers, has been associated with an interwoven set of values: holism, vocationalism, child-centredness, humanism [5] (Nias *et al*, 1989; Woods *et al*, 1997). However, contemporary educational policies would seem to be heading for a powerful reconstruction of primary teachers' identities (Menter *et al*, 1997; Woods *et al*, 1997). It is therefore important to gauge the impact produced on Portuguese primary schools by the dissemination, from the mid-eighties on, of attenuated forms of neo-managerialism:

- were the new managerial perspectives, however embryonic, seen as a challenge to the identity of Portuguese primary teachers?
- in what areas of the teachers' identity matrix did the new neo-managerialist concepts gain the strongest foothold?

These are the issues that form the basis of the present section, and which guide a considerable part of the reflection undertaken in subsequent sections.

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[5] full and harmonious development of the child; teaching as a vocation, a deeply felt "mission"; caring" ethos

Professional Identity

Prominent features in the professional identity of Portuguese primary teachers were the omnipresence of the *children,* the *social relevance* of the teacher role and the *basic skills* that the pupils are expected to develop at this level of learning (mainly reading and writing). "Colleagues" were conspicuously absent from a discourse that stressed professional fulfilment as a result of a multifaceted and lasting relationship with the children.

> When I was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always said 'teacher'. Because I like teaching, I like being with children, I enjoy watching the way they develop under our guidance (...) The primary teacher is with the children day in day out for a whole year. The teacher becomes a mother and father to them. Sometimes we spend longer with them than their own parents. They tell us about their problems and we try to help them to solve them. It is very different from, for instance, the 2nd Cycle, where the children have seven or eight teachers and 50-minute classes. Everything seems much more planned and limited there (Ana Maria, contract teacher, Main School).

This bond with the children is so strong that it remained the matrix of professional identity, even after years of involvement in other professional spheres. For instance, Rita, who has been the head teacher of Main School for the past ten years, whenever asked about her job, mentions almost exclusively the personal satisfaction derived from a profession which contributes to the learning and welfare of children.

The importance attached to personal satisfaction also helped primary teachers, especially the older ones, to find compensations for the difficulties they encountered at the professional level: "It is a very demanding job, but also a very satisfying one. We see the children around us making progress, and this is its own reward. The salary is not the only issue. It's a way of life." (Teresa, senior teacher, Park School)

Among younger teachers, the secondary importance attached to salary and status was less in evidence. Young teachers claimed that they loved their job; but their professional identity was markedly characterised by their place in the social hierarchy. They said things like: "I have always applied for a higher level of teaching, but haven't managed to get a place", (Susana, Main School) or "I couldn't get a full-time job in the second cycle." (Sonia, Park School).

Thus, they had become primary teachers but were acutely aware of their inferior social status in certain contexts.

> In villages the teacher is still regarded as an important person, someone who is both teaching and educating the children. Here in the city, teachers are very cut off: the teacher is there to teach and nothing else (Ana Maria, contract teacher, Main School).

In upper-middle class communities the status problems were even more acute:

> There are parents who treat us as their servants. A few days ago a mother told me not to set her daughter homework except on Tuesdays and Thursdays, because she had too many other things to do. Another one asked me if I had a degree. For them a primary teacher is nothing but a second class teacher (Helena, Main School).

It therefore comes as no surprise that embarking on a teaching career can, particularly among the middle and upper classes, lead to a bitter disillusionment. Indeed, the increasingly protracted degree courses to which the younger teachers were subjected (after 1986) did not necessarily guarantee a passport to the essential ingredients of middle-class status traditionally associated with the profession: respectability and security. Job security did not exist for contract teachers; respectability was challenged at every turn. And the emblematic image of the profession, the public service ethic which was a feature of bureau-professionalism was losing credibility in a universe in which citizens were increasingly giving way to consumers (Whitty, 1996; Gewirtz, 2002). In this climate young graduates increasingly ask themselves:

> But what kind of career is this, where you don't feel competent at anything? Where a parent can come and say,' Don't set my son homework because it leaves him no time to play'. Or another comes and complains, 'You've been doing the same

> thing for almost a week, and John hasn't brought any work home. You've got to push them more'. What profession, what career is this? (Helena, contract teacher, Main School).
>
> There are people who left school at 15 earning as much or more than me. Do you think the children don't know this? How can they take school seriously, how can they respect their teachers? (Claudia, contract teacher, Main School).

However, even among young teachers, who have been trained to teach at different levels, the quality of the relationship with the children was still presented as a competitive advantage of primary education: "Children are more affectionate, more attached to us. It is a very close relationship, much more gratifying than in the second cycle" (Dulce, contract teacher, Park School).

The difference between new teachers coming into the system and those who already have years of experience seemed, therefore, to lie more in the degree than the nature of job satisfaction. New teachers continued, in spite of feeling insecure in their own identity in a universe that no longer appreciates the "missionary spirit" (Maria Teresa, Avenue School), to consider the relationship with the children as the most important and most gratifying feature of their work. Colleagues were on a secondary plane: "At the end of the day, our job is our classroom" (Helena, contract teacher, Main School).

The data collected suggests that the identity matrix of Portuguese primary teachers has been little affected by the managerial concepts preeminent in recent decades. Only on the "vocational" front, and among younger teachers, does there seem to be a greater sensitivity to the new "market rules" and "economic imperatives".

The indifference of most teachers with regard to the new legislative directives (new professionalism, school culture, entrepreneurialism) is confirmed by the reasons they give for choosing the school where they work.

Organisational Identity

Proximity to home, the quality of infra-structures in the area and the social background of the pupils (Main School) were the main reasons given by

teachers for their annual application to particular schools. Despite the variety of reasons put forward, there is an interesting common denominator: the total absence of references to the dynamics of the institutions they were applying to (projects, leadership styles, working relationships, socialising with colleagues). The lack of interest in the organisational characteristics of the schools was so marked that the majority of those interviewed said that they actually had no previous information about the school, besides its location.

The interviews at Main School, one of the best-known schools in Lisbon, clearly revealed that this lack of information could not be attributed wholly to the bureaucratic idiosyncrasies of the official applications machine:

> The school is in the area I live in, but I didn't know hardly anything about it. The only information I got, before I started working here, was the day I received my contract. *One of my* colleagues, I can't remember who, the moment she realised I had been assigned to this school said: "Oh dear, poor thing, you're going to have to work hard." *And another commented* that the parents were really difficult (Adriana, associate teacher, Main School, author's emphasis).

This extract shows how easy it would have been to get information about this school, if the candidate had only taken the trouble to do so. However, teachers seemed to care little about the organisational identities of the schools .The only aspects of organisational identity spontaneously mentioned were those relating to the characteristics of the school population: the social background of the pupils and the expectations of students' academic performance:

> I was aware that the school was located in L and as L has a different social background, that also influenced me (Sílvia, Main school).

> I chose this school because it is near my home and the children are good pupils. It's different (...) I was in another school where the children were good pupils too, but they couldn't do better due to the people they mixed with and even the food. That bothers me, because I like teaching, I even like telling pupils about other subjects that are not on the syllabus. Well, it's satisfying to work with these kind of children (Adriana, associate teacher, Main school).

Some teachers also expressed their preference for working in a state school:

> In a private school the work is much more controlled. It is much more supervised. In a state school there is more freedom, you are free to do whatever you like, the classroom is yours, it's your own territory (...) The boss is invisible: it's the State. People don't want close supervision. If they work for the State, it's to get certain 'perks' (Filipa, associate teacher, Main school).

> In a private school you are worried because the parents are paying and you have to do what they want you to. Over here, it's more relaxed (Teresa M., associate teacher, Park school).

This connection between State schools and having a free hand confirms the findings of other studies, which show that there is no clear-cut opposition between educational centralization and teachers' professional autonomy (Broadfoot *et al*, 1988, Grace, 1995, Lauder, 1999). Neither is indifference towards new organisational directives peculiar to Portugal:

> In most European countries, the fact of belonging to a given school organisation did not play, until recently, a significant role in teacher identity. Recruited and placed at the whim of administrative decisions, teachers saw no need to form a lasting attachment to the school (Novoa, 1998, p183).

It therefore comes as no surprise that the new organisational obligations should be felt to be a burden (see Chapter 6):

> Nowadays we are called upon to do so many different things. We have in-service training and the schools are usually involved in more than one project. Besides the school project, there are other projects. All this is very demanding on teachers. Apart from this, parents today are very intolerant, and this is not always right. In fact it's the main problem (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

Professional Relations between Colleagues

The Sacred Rules: Privacy and Inviolability of the Classroom

The limits of freedom granted to teachers by Portuguese State schools centre around the classroom (Afonso, 1999). The teachers interviewed were well aware

of their autonomy in this domain: "In his classroom the teacher is king of the castle" (Fátima, senior teacher, Main School).

Moreover, they expressed the desire to protect their classrooms from intrusion of any kind:

> It is also important that this school has *independent rooms, isolated rooms,* because last year I worked in an open-plan school, which is very confusing. It's disturbing for both pupils and teacher (Francisca, associate teacher, Main School, my emphasis).

> Teachers in the other cycles give one class in one place, another in another. With us it's different. We always work in the same place. We establish a special relationship with *our classroom* and, when we're placed in the same school again, try our best to stay in it. It ends up being a little bit like *home* (Constança, senior teacher, Park School).

It was therefore not surprising perhaps that the use of public areas - gymnasium, library - and the sharing of classrooms for Leisure Time Activities (LTA) were resorted to with a certain reluctance or when utterly unavoidable:

> It's impossible to give a PE lesson. Impossible. Firstly , because there are always people going past, and then because there is always somebody checking up. The children are not relaxed and neither are we (Adriana, associate teacher, Main School).

> Everyone avoids rooms where there are LTA, because they are dirty and untidy. Teachers arrive to find the rooms in disarray, with things all over the place. But that's not the only reason people avoid LTA. The truth is that no one likes to share their rooms (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

At Park School, similar problems were encountered when parents tried to set up a "Play" project. The teachers only agreed to this taking place in the "dirty areas", i.e. the area outside classrooms in open-plan *schools,* generally used for painting and handicrafts. And even so, the implementation of this project raised objections because it interfered with the concentration of the (few) teachers who remained in school after classes (field notes, school board meeting, Oct. '99).

It would obviously be naïve to attribute this jealous guarding of the classroom merely to factors of a pedagogic or sentimental nature (identification with the work-space, desire to safeguard pupils' concentration). Indeed, the "reserve of intimacy" maintained by the majority of teachers goes beyond the *physical* boundaries of the classroom:

> In the teachers' room people chat about this and that - the weather, the traffic, T.V. programmes - everything but what they *should* be talking about: the problems we face every day with the children and their families. Perhaps because I had almost always worked on my own, when I came to this school and saw seventeen teachers, I thought there would be some team spirit, with teachers discussing things and trying to solve problems together. But now I've been here for three years and can see it isn't true (Simone, associate teacher, Main school).

Indeed, prevailing cultural codes limit mutual support between colleagues. Both 'supply' of and 'demand' for support were avoided, even when teachers were at the beginning of their career:

> Last year I was given the first year. I panicked. How am I going to teach these children to read? Because it's difficult and I didn't know how. I listened to my colleagues talking, and didn't know what to do (Ana Maria, novice teacher, Main school).

> New teachers seem so lost when they arrive at school that sometimes I even go up to them *to see if I can summon up a bit of advice* (Fátima, senior teacher, Main School, my emphasis).

The difficulties surrounding cooperation between teachers seemed to be bound up with the bureaucratic and Fordist rules prevailing in the Portuguese work context. This paradigmatic orientation was reinforced by a certain built-in concept of professional competence, which hampered cooperation. This concept emphasised the criteria of independence and self-sufficiency in the definition of the "good teacher", to the detriment of wider perspectives on professional development. The norms of equality of status prevailing in Portuguese primary schools, insofar as they did not affect the privileges of older teachers (see institutional participation), also served to transform offers or acceptance of "help" into a sign of professional inferiority or superiority:

> The other day I asked for *help* from a colleague who is familiar with the 28-word method. I needed this method to work with one of my pupils. She gave me some material and now I hope she'll show me how to use it. But there is very little exchange of this kind. People are afraid of saying they don't know, or can't do something. They are afraid of being labelled unprofessional (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

> We are all teachers, here, all colleagues. No one is superior to anyone else. If I opened my mouth to criticise a colleague, she would immediately retort: and who do you think you are? (Fernanda, senior teacher, Park School).

That was why the admission of problems to colleagues who were closest personally and professionally had to be approached with circumspection:

> I chat a lot to my colleague Adriana because she had the Hugo problem. We talk a lot about it, but *she has never asked me for help. We are friends, but the conversation is always kept on a superficial level.* I have never been asked for *help* with school problems (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

Fear of breaking the rules, and thereby publicly exposing professional difficulties, is by no means unfounded. This particular aspect of the problem was readily apparent in the only episode I witnessed, during the whole of the investigation, in which one of the teachers decided to bring up the difficulties she was having at a teachers' meeting. Although she was an extremely committed teacher, and responsible for a very difficult class - six girls and seventeen boys and one of the most glaring examples of selective class composition at Main School - no one admitted to experiencing similar difficulties. The teacher's public avowal of her problem thus turned into a painful personal exposure:

> I was quite shocked that after working at the school for so many years, after going to the teachers' meeting and speaking so openly, nobody should say a word. I felt completely left out. Am I the only one to feel this? Am I the only one with problems? (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

In reality, Simone's openness had led to some unflattering professional interpretations:

> Only a few days ago in a teachers' meeting I was very upset because a colleague with tears in her eyes - *and it was the first time I had been in a situation like that in 20 years of service* - revealed quite clearly that she was *in despair.* You could see she wanted to leave, to run away, *because she was incapable of controlling her class.* I don't know the class, or what kind of pupils she has. But I was shocked to see the point she had reached (Clemente, senior teacher, Main School).

Given the risk of this type of interpretation when the privacy taboo is broken, it is not surprising that many of the teachers prefer to be loyal to the principle which Liebarman called "be private, be practical" (1993).

Working with colleagues: Profane norms

Throughout the twentieth century Portuguese primary education was subjected to a succession of divergent ideologies (see Chapter 1). This situation created a climate particularly favourable to the development of a heterogeneous school structure, which brought together extremely diverse forms of action and refletion on action (Santos, 1990, Sarmento, 1998). And since they outlived each political cycle, the various mandates granted to education tended to overlap and, in a sense, "impregnate" subsequent processes. To illustrate this phenomenon, I may draw on the metaphor of the 'school palimpsest' (Sarmento, 1998):

> Palimpsest is, literally, the medieval codex on which the copyists inscribed their mark with a stiletto, salvaging for the purpose sheets of parchment which had already been written on. The sheets were scraped, without completely obliterating the previous text, which, with the passing of time, would reappear (op. cit., p.35).

The concepts and practices of Portuguese primary teachers often seemed, therefore, to derive from completely contrasting sources, which was precisely the situation identified in the realm of collegiality. The various signs of segmentation, referred to throughout this chapter, contrasted with a marked acceptance of the principles of teamwork. In fact, virtually all the teachers

interviewed expressed agreement with the principles of teamwork.[6] The arguments put forward were a combination of personal, social and professional factors:

> I like to exchange ideas with colleagues, to feel the support of other people; otherwise I end up feeling extremely isolated. Apart from that, everything is easier when you work as a team. You get better results and the atmosphere is much more pleasant (Iva, associate teacher, Park School).

> The school is a single entity. It should organise parties as a single entity. Some people are good at music. Others have talents for the visual arts. These qualities should be recognized and complement each other. We can all learn from each other. I am sure that if the school worked like this, we would all feel much better (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

Agreement with the principles of teamwork and, in particular, the constant need to justify the fact that it does not exist, show a certain penetration of the new managerial concepts at this level of education. The "profane" nature of the new professional guidelines[7] was, however, patent in the ease with which the absence of such practices was legitimised in social terms:

> teachers are always moving from one school to another . It is hard to form teams in this situation (Iva, associate teacher, Park School).

> It's not that people don't want to work with their colleagues. It's just that life in the big cities is very complicated. It's hard to get people to stay on after 3.30 (Clemente, Main school).

> A lot of people here have young children. It's difficult to find a time to work together (Maria João, contract teacher, Main school).

It should also be mentioned that the apparent ideological consensus as to the advantages of teamwork concealed important differences when it came to:

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[6] The concept of teamwork is that of Muchielli (1988), who brings together interpersonal and professional aspects

[7] with regard to the "golden rule" of non-interference described above

- the areas suitable for teamwork and the forms it should take;
- the priority given to teamwork when pitted against all the demands, both personal and professional, with which teachers were confronted.

The very concept of teamwork prevalent among the teachers had, as we shall now see, very little to do with the new neo-managerial concepts.

Working with Colleagues: dominant patterns

The term collegiality has been used in educational literature to describe widely differentiated types of interaction (see Little, 1991; Hargreaves, 1998). In order to avoid the misapprehensions commonly surrounding this issue, I shall begin by clarifying the concepts I shall be using in this sub-section:

Segmentation - non-existence or little relevance, in terms of content and frequency, of forms of professional interaction between teachers.

Collaboration (consensus)- this designation will be used to refer to teamwork carried out against a background of widely shared values (Timberley & Robinson, 1998).

Cooperation (or coordination) - This term will refer to forms of voluntary cooperation among teachers within a framework of values and orientations that may be partially or radically divergent. In these circumstances, agreements are circumscribed by particular objects and norms, which may play a central part in the cohesion of the group, or of the school (Derouet & Dutercerq, 1992).

New professionalism - This term will refer to forms of voluntary and compulsory cooperation among teachers, within a framework of neo-managerial values and orientations (e.g. "whole school planning; "school project ", marketing of schools, "contrived collegiality").

Table 10 summarises the main professional patterns identified in the schools under analysis. It should be mentioned that:

- segmentation was the dominant pattern identified in the study (more than half of the references);
- forms of cooperation were mentioned by roughly one -third of the teachers;

- new professionalism had few but important advocates;
- references to "collaboration" were rare and occurred mainly with reference to the revolutionary period.

Each of the contemporary patterns will now be described and analysed, in some detail.

Table 10 - Patterns of Collegiality

Patterns	Forms	Focus
Segmentation	Consolidated Naturalistic	Classroom and Core curriculum
Cooperation	Mutual support Exchange Joint action	Personal and professional support Pedagogic Pedagogic
New Professionalism	Teacher-parent centred Teacher centred	Administrative, social, peripheral curriculum

Segmentation

The interviews conducted confirmed the still largely "solitary" nature of the teaching profession in Portugal: "the predominant attitude is still one of 'my children, my classroom" (Sara, Main school).

> Here teachers lead cloistered lives. They do their own thing (Iva, associate teacher, Park school).

> They all do things their own way. One thinks the syllabus for the second year is too sparse, so she starts on the syllabus for the third. Another thinks directive teaching gets the best results, so she does it that way. Others think that parents have the highest authority, so they do what pleases them (Maria, associate teacher, Main school).

In spite of constituting the dominant patterns of collegiality in primary schools, educational segmentation was still far from constituting a homogeneous category in respect of the motivations in which it was rooted. Indeed, the research made it possible to identify two main forms: "consolidated", and "naturalistic".

The *"consolidated"* type brought together a restricted group of teachers whose isolation was voluntary and based on strong convictions about the advantages of concentrating attention on the classroom and the pupils. "There just isn't time for everything" and "when we try to do everything, our main work suffers" were some of the expressions heard most frequently when these teachers were asked to give their opinion about their obligations outside the classroom (work with colleagues, meetings, extra-curricular activities, projects). The psycho-social factors commonly used to justify teacher "resistance" - anxiety, insecurity, corporatism - would seem to be somewhat unconvincing explanations of the observed behaviour. Indeed, among the most isolated teachers, few had had any difficulty making their mark professionally: most enjoyed a good, in some cases excellent, pedagogic reputation, both within the school and in the community. Despite, in most cases, coming up to the age of retirement, they were still committed to their work. Their isolation was not the result of unwillingness, but of a profound conviction of the 'ethic of care' which holds the children as the central points of reference. It was this ethic which prompted them to concentrate all their time and available resources directly on work with the children.

This voluntary self-isolation on the part of certain Portuguese primary teachers confirmed, at least in part, Flinders's contention that "isolation is a convenient strategy in that it safeguards the time and energy necessary to meet the demands of teaching" (Flinders, 1988). We should not forget, however, that we are dealing with teachers who had completed their professional training and socialization at a time when group work and organisational collaboration were educationally unheard of and politically untenable. There may be other

strategies for adaptation, including teamwork itself, more in line with the experience of teachers who completed their training in different conditions.

"The *naturalist*" category includes a broad band of teachers who, while receptive in principle to the notion of teamwork, claimed that personal considerations (young children, involvement in training), contextual conditions (size of school, urban school) or professional aspects (multiple demands, clash of interests, school dynamics) made it difficult to put into practice.

> There isn't much teamwork. There should be, but there isn't. Everyone works on their own, in their classroom. Maybe it's because the school is very big, and it's difficult to get together (Diana, associate teacher, Main school).

> A contract teacher is never in one school for long. In a big school, with a large teaching staff, we're completely lost because we're only there for a short time. In these circumstances it's very difficult to be accepted and to work as a team (Lurdes, contract teacher, Park School).

The way most of the comments were phrased suggested a wide acceptance of the "status quo" in this field. This element seems to confirm the superficial assimilation of the new organisational and professional concepts referred to in the previous point (*profane norms*).

Finally, it should be stressed that none of the forms of segmentation under analysis implied a total absence of relations between colleagues. Discussing 'cases' and 'where we are on the syllabus' were practices common to almost all the teachers interviewed. These patterns of communication were in fact very similar to those identified in other countries: the custom of 'labelling' pupils according to their social or ethnic origin (Rist, 1971); the habit of measuring personal progress by comparison with colleagues (Lortie, 1975) and of organising professional activity in terms of coverage or non-coverage of school subjects (Huberman, 1993).

However, these forms of interaction are not typical of "collaboration cultures" (Nias *et al*, 1989; Hargreaves, 1998). Storytelling for instance, the most typical

form of professional interaction in Portuguese schools, is a feature of contexts in which collaboration is absent:

> Under conditions of nearly complete independence, teachers satisfy the demands of daily classroom life by occasional forays in search of specific ideas, solutions or reassurances (...) Contacts among teachers are opportunistic. (...) Teachers use stories to gain information indirectly when they are confronted with powerful occupational norms that suppress more instrumental forms of help-seeking (Little, 1990, p515).

Coordination

The defence of privacy and independence in their daily work did not mean that primary teachers failed, throughout the process of democratic management of schools, to develop meaningful forms of interaction with colleagues. The end of the self-management experiment did not, of course, mean the suppression of all voluntary forms of cooperation between teachers. The scope of this cooperation seems, however, to have become more restricted, with professional relations more dependent on personal preferences:

> People lived a period of great openness, great interest [during the revolution]. There were many projects and people were strongly committed to progress. Lectures were organised; writers were invited to schools. There was an exchange of information and of teaching materials. If a colleague attended a course, he was ready to pass on what he had learned to the others. It was a stimulating time. (...)
> Now all this has gone. You work with a colleague you get along reasonably well with, and that's it (Sofia, senior teacher, Main School).

Nevertheless, like the "revolutionary experiment" that persists in the testimonies of many of the older teachers, the memory of certain experiences of peer collaboration may remain alive for many years to come:

> I spent three years in a school in the Padre Cruz district (a difficult area). I managed to stay so long because I loved it. I had a colleague I worked really well with, and we did everything together: we prepared classes, organised visits and

> trips, exchanged lesson-plans (Fatima, senior teacher, Main school).
>
> When I was in Ameixoeira, I always worked with the same colleague. We got on really well. If I was having problems making a worksheet, she would do it, and vice-versa. We exchanged everything. In the final year she was doing a training course at João de Deus and didn't have much time. So she used all my material. I would go into her classroom and give her all I had (Hermínia, senior teacher, Park school).

The post-revolutionary forms of cooperation generally involved *only* two teachers (pair-work) and may imply different degrees of interdependence: mutual support, "exchange" and joint action.

Mutual support

A substantial proportion of the teachers interviewed (approximately one-third) referred to a special preference for one particular colleague: frequent socialising during the morning break, lunches together, brief professional discussions, occasional outings.

The struggle against the feeling of isolation at work and personal empathy constituted the principal 'raison d'être' of this kind of interaction:

> I often meet with my colleague Sonia, to have lunch or discuss anything that's bothering us. It's good to do this because we don't feel so isolated. Perhaps the fact that we came to the school at the same time brought us together (Claudia, contract teacher, Main school).
>
> Last year I was placed in a school where I ended up very isolated. It was for that reason I didn't want to stay there. So I came back here, where I have colleagues I can talk to if I've got problems (Joana, associate teacher, Main School).

Despite being the most basic form of cooperation identified, this kind of relationship played an important role in the daily life of certain teachers. In some cases, it became a major factor in the way teachers shaped their careers (moving together through the school system, joint participation in certain

courses and training sessions). Besides this, it sometimes represented a first step towards deeper forms of cooperation.

Sharing of information and products ("exchange")

At an intermediate level of cooperation professional interchanges between colleagues became more systematic. These forms of cooperation came under the heading of "exchange" and essentially involved aspects of work such as conversations between teachers, exchange of worksheets and lesson-plans, recounting experiences, joint preparation of peripheral curricular activities like music, P.E. or games.

> Last year I was lucky and found a colleague I got on really well with. We talked about the students, discussed the most difficult cases and exchanged worksheets and lesson-plans. Sometimes we prepared a different kind of class together, a game or something like that (Silvana, Park School).

> I often get together with my colleague Victoria who has the same year as me. We exchange ideas, look at each other's lesson-plans and try to complement each other (Joana, Main school).

This type of interaction seemed to help, above all, to diversify educational resources without significantly affecting individual teachers' *modus operandi*. Suggestions made by colleagues were incorporated into each individual teacher's pedagogy and, on occasions, considerably modified prior to being put into practice. They largely corresponded to the practices of "scanning" and "sharing" described by Little (1990). They were ways of enriching tasks rather than of transforming professional patterns ("habitus").

"Joint action"

At a deeper level, "exchange" took on the proportions of "joint action". Indeed, in spite of the prevailing patterns of segmentation, some teachers managed to establish long lasting forms of cooperation, which embraced the main aspects of professional activity: lesson planning, implementation, and assessment.

> My colleague Simone and I, for example, establish aims together, compare test results and try to relay more or less the same message to different groups of parents. We work together, but not always using the same methods, because we don't have to be the same. This pair-work makes us feel more secure (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

These forms of collaboration were, however, very rare, appearing to require stronger personal and professional affinities than those which characterized other types of cooperation:

> I came here this year and there were colleagues in the third year, Sara and Simone, who were already here and worked together a lot. At the beginning of the year we all tried to meet and work together. We tried to discuss everything, from study visits to planning. We tried at the beginning, as I said, but it just didn't work. (...) It didn't work because they were used to working together and I wasn't. But it wasn't only that. We didn't see eye to eye or have the same priorities. So I ended up working more with Ana. We don't plan together because our classes are very different, but we discuss things a lot. And sometimes we come up with more ideas than the three of us did before (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

> When I was at Oliveira School I was lucky in having a colleague that really understood me. We worked so well that she even took the words out of my mouth: I love it when that happens (Fátima, senior teacher, Park School).

In this sense "joint action" came close to the process I described as "collaboration". The depth of the relationship did not, however, preclude a certain diversity of values, interests and skills:

> Sara is very good at mathematics, and helps me a lot with that (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

> We decide the activities together, but we don't always do things the same way (Sara, Main School).

Although the focus and the level of the interaction varied, the three forms of cooperation - support, exchange, joint action - shared some essential features. First, they were all the result of *personal and professional affinities* between teachers, which were generated quite spontaneously, although based on certain

common "prerequisites" such as age, levels taught, years of service in the school. Despite the strong interpersonal dimension, which was a feature of these relationships, they should not be confused with simple friendship. They were all forms of cooperation that brought together, each in their own particular way, the teacher's personal and task orientations (Mucchielli, 1982). Secondly, none of these different forms of interaction implied a fully shared set of values and interests. Various teachers considered a certain degree of diversity, particularly in the area of skills and interests, positive. However, the basis for cooperation was considerably restricted when there was serious discord over major aspects of a teacher's work (teaching models, for instance):

> Last year I worked with a colleague who belonged to the Modern School Movement. I never interfered in her work or she in mine. We communicated what we had to communicate, and that was fine; but coordinating her actual work with mine was a different matter. She used to say, *'Evaluation sheets, fine', but when it came to classroom management it was completely different (...).* For me the Modern School Movement has a lot to be said in its favour but generally speaking, it doesn't suit me. I just can't have the pupils moving around and making so much noise while they work. It's hard enough as it is to keep order in such big classes, so this way for me is unthinkable (Cesária, contract teacher, Main School, my emphasis).

Finally, the types of cooperation identified had developed against a background of strong sense of respect for peer autonomy. They seemed, consequently, to be based upon "norms which stress[ed] sharing and equality and foster mutual communication without requiring conformity" (Lortie, 1975, p112).

In fact, in these forms of cooperation almost anything went: adapting and "mixing" ideas, altering materials, delaying putting things into practice, abandoning strategies found not to work with a particular group:

> Sometimes we think, maybe if I do it more my colleague's way or partly my way and partly hers, it'll work better. So we try it and see if it works. It depends on the class (Cristina, associate teacher, Main school).

> However well you work together, you can't do everything the same way. There are things that work very well with one class but not with another. There are things that work well on a

> Tuesday but not on a Friday. You can't force it (Claudia, contract teacher, Main school).

This flexibility was not just a smokescreen to protect the teachers' autonomy. Reports collected showed that certain activities had been tried without success and subsequently abandoned or modified. Other testimonies revealed failure on the part of the teacher when trying out strategies, tried and tested in the past, on a new group of children. The current research thus indicates that at least part of the problem may lie in the difficulties inherent in a process of cooperation developed against the background of a constant "dialogue with the situation" arising from the specific nature, interactivity and unpredictability of each class (Lieberman, 1988; Huberman, 1993):

> [the teacher] adapts on the spot the instructional materials bought, given or scavenged, as a function of the time of day, the degree of pupil attentiveness, the peculiar skill deficiency emerging in the course of activity(..) In doing so, the teacher begins improvising with a series of ad hoc responses to the new situation (Huberman, 1993, p15).

The complexity of these obstacles, played down in the prescriptive models, help to give collegiality the air of an artificial process when instituted administratively (Hargreaves, 1998).

New Professionalism

The forms of professional interaction described above were based on informal, fragmented, contingent, coercion-free cooperation. There are, however, those social actors who try to turn the school into a cultural unit based on common and fully-shared values. This attitude was particularly prevalent among teachers with management or "special needs" roles.

> People don't regard the school as a space common to everyone. What I mean is that three or four people arrange to work together because they work well together, but they don't know what's going on in other years. The spirit of the school is not like that (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

> Partnership cannot be based on friendship, but on school grade levels, needs of the school, needs of the pupils, good manners, the example we have to set to others, particularly the children (Fátima, special needs teacher, Main School).

This critical attitude, while socially limited, gained strength during the course of the observation. In fact, at the beginning of this research, it was practically impossible, with the exception of the limited group of teachers who fell into the "consolidated segmentation" category, to find voices raised against any kind of cooperation between teachers. They were all signs of "modernity" and "good practice": "ah yes, we already have colleagues who work together. Not everyone is dyed-in-the-wool." (Armanda, deputy teacher). However, in the course of the period of observation, certain forms of cooperation began to be progressively ignored or even regarded as politically incorrect: "Here teachers work with people they like, not those they *should* work with." (Fátima, special needs teacher, Main School).

Besides this, there was a decline in the prestige attached to work carried out in the classroom. Initially, management was seen to indulge teachers who failed to participate in school activities but who showed great pedagogic ability and dedication to the pupils. This tolerance gradually began to diminish, and teachers' pedagogic excellence was no longer highlighted when associated with institutional practices considered outmoded and inappropriate.

Although some of these changes reflected genuine difficulties in involving certain teachers in non-teaching tasks, they also illustrated the emergence, at the educational level under analysis, of new organisational concepts and new norms for teacher professionalism. This change was in fact explicit in some of the interviews:

> What is missing is *that old story of a new school culture*, which some have taken on board and others not. *For some people, professionalism is still bound up with the idea of getting pupils through at the end of the year.* So work done inside the classroom is what is important, and there is the idea that if everyone works like that, the school is a good school. *There are others with*

> *a different conception, who realize that things aren't as simple as that* (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

These changes helped to produce a significant increase in the number of "group" activities in which the teachers were called upon to join. The new criteria for individual and organisational performance also became a new source of tension among some teachers.

Patterns of Institutional Participation

Teachers' Meetings and Social Events

The emphasis laid by primary teachers on their work with the children did not mean that they could avoid social and professional relations with their peers. Indeed, even the most ardent apologists of professional autonomy could not get out of certain types of cooperation imposed by social norms and legislation. There were two main types of involuntary cooperation identified in the course of the current research: attendance of *teachers' meetings* and participation in *social events* organised by the school (parties, exhibitions, school magazine). It is the role of these kinds of interaction in the school dynamic that constitutes the next objective of the analysis.

Meetings

Primary teaching was the only educational sub-system whose management model retained plenary teachers' meetings as the formal organ of school management. It was also the one in which the process of legal and administrative dependence took on more significant configurations. This produced a marked contradiction between the 'vacuum' of authority (content) and the 'self-managing' way in which it was exercised. It is therefore of interest to inquire into how Portuguese teachers handled this contradiction and, in

particular, how they used the narrow margin of autonomy granted them by the system ,notably in the pedagogic field.

Systematic observation of teachers' meetings, over the period of approximately twelve months showed that the formal institutionalisation of collegiality in Portugal had not contributed to the development of patterns of 'extended professionalism' among the teachers. Plenary teachers' meetings were not seen as an opportunity to create a common culture among teachers - technical or organisational - produced by the convergence of objectives, concepts, languages and pedagogic processes (see also Chapter 4). There was neither collegiate pressure designed to achieve congruence between the learning/teaching models used in the various schools, nor practices of reflection or scrutiny on the pedagogic work carried out by individual teachers. Professional evaluation itself took on a 'virtual' character whereby it could actually be processed before the report was even submitted (Park school), or without the envelope containing it ever being opened (Main school). School unity was merely formal and boiled down to an exercise in rhetoric solemnly laid down in a document - the school project - drawn up with the minimum of participation (see Chapter 3). Discussion of technical and pedagogic issues also played an extremely minor role in teachers' meetings. Indeed, as will be seen from the detailed analysis conducted in the next Chapter, the part played by this organ was essentially:

- informative, for the relaying of administrative directives and the dissemination of cultural, pedagogic and social programmes;
- social, for the organisation of school events (e.g. Christmas party) .

Teachers' meetings were therefore in no way generative of any significant collaboration or pedagogic reflection on the part of teachers.

Team ventures: parties, exhibitions, school magazines

Paradoxically, the few team events organised in schools constituted, of all the collective practices observed, the ones most likely to illustrate the segmentation of educational practice noted in Portuguese primary schools:

- *exhibitions of pupils' work,* classroom centred, with no clear relationship between the exhibits (thematic, graphic or any other unity). Thus in one exhibition, for example, posters of Marilyn Monroe came after drawings illustrating the seasons of the year and before the description of a visit to the zoo and a graphic representation of the respiratory system (Main school, July 1999).
- *the organisation of parties* was very sketchy and concerned mainly with avoiding discipline problems ("enter stage right, exit stage left"; "sit in rows at the side of your teacher") and with ensuring that the programme had a certain variety ("there should be a song, a dance and some acting"). There was no previous defining of objectives or of the message it was intended to convey.

The 'collective' thus in no way evoked any semblance of cohesion, or give-and-take on the part of individuals. The 'school organisation' could be summed up, in its concrete form, as a 'loosely coupled' collection of options, visions and individual ventures. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that at the Christmas party put on at Park school (1999) no eyebrows were raised at the inclusion of a dance typical of the 'Popular Saints' (celebrated in Portugal in June), a choreography of dance music ('Macarena') and a cowboy song with costumes and references to 'Made in USA'.

This notion of the collective seemed to be largely unconscious, which does not mean, of course, that it was any the less powerful. When the independence of the individual teacher was questioned, even from the 'noblest' of motives, the result was invariably a conflict, which was settled by the restoring of the 'natural order' of non-interference. This was the case, for example, with the relaunching of the school magazine at Main school. Two teachers volunteered to do the *montage* and, in order to give the magazine some technical and visual cohesion, offered to adapt any texts given them by colleagues (using specific software). Their colleagues not only refused this 'help' but also approved the proposal that each class should have its own page and that the theme, content and graphics would be entirely independent of other classes' contributions. One

group of teachers even contended enthusiastically that the magazine needed no cohesion, even in minor, formal respects (print-type and size).

The supporters of cohesion in the magazine, clearly in a minority, restricted their comments to formal and graphic considerations, never even touching on the 'content' and 'pedagogic processes' that would be reflected on every page. The editorial line and educational philosophy to be conveyed by the magazine were likewise left out of the discussion.

It can therefore be concluded that the teamwork practices identified in Portuguese schools during the final phase of democratic school management - teachers' meetings and social events - were in no way a barrier to the autonomy of each individual teacher. 'Collective' discussions and ventures actually did more to legitimise than to limit the diversity of practices in Portuguese primary schools.

Micropolitical Activity and School Hierarchies

The degree of freedom granted to teachers by this special "collective" vision of the school was, however, not unqualified. Besides formal constraints (legislation and other forms of regulation), there were also social practices that strongly determined the participation and working conditions of many teachers. In fact, the social structure of Portuguese primary schools was, during the period under analysis, strongly characterized by socio-professional cleavages of a bureaucratic nature: between senior, associate and contract teachers (see Table 11).

Table 11 - Professional Categories

Professional categories	Nature of contract
Contract teachers	Short-term (from a week to a year)
Associate teachers	Long-term
	Regional, not school link
Senior teachers	Permanent tenure in a school

The influence of senior teachers manifested itself in an uneven distribution of certain resources and equipment. Micro-political activity was identified essentially in the following areas: *class composition, choice of classroom, timetable preferences for the use of school equipment, guarantee of substitution in the case of absence.* It was invariably the senior teachers who came off best in these conflicts:

> As contract teachers they ignore us. What I feel, and what many teachers feel, is that contract teachers are the skivvies. They get the worst classes, the worst problems. We get the dregs that nobody else wants. It's not very nice to say this, but it's true (Ana, contract teacher, Main School).

> When it's time to choose timetables for the library and the gym, the list goes round to everyone [pause] *but it goes round the senior teachers first* [stress] (Celeste, contract teacher, Main School).

> There's always a fight about who's going to share their classes with LTA and English, because nobody wants them. Last year we decided to draw lots. It fell to a teacher who was about to retire, and she was really annoyed. She does nothing but grumble. *That's why there's talk of abandoning the lottery idea next year. Those classes will simply go to new teachers!* (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

There were, however, issues so crucial to the interests of the groups that they found their way into public debate. Class composition always caused the most intense micropolitical activity, sometimes giving rise to heated discussion at teachers' meetings. At Park School, such discussions managed to dominate four teachers' meetings, following the "accidental" allocation of a class with seventeen deprived pupils to a senior teacher (field notes, July-September 1999). At Main School proceedings were, in general, conducted more discreetly, although not all the senior teachers were equally subtle when it came to expressing their preferences:

> The older teachers live here and know the pupils, their brothers, sisters and cousins. They even know their surnames. So they say, 'I want this pupil. This pupil's mine'. And they even go as far as to say, 'Oh, this one's Guinean. He's no good.

> You can have him.' It's appalling, what goes on. And the classes are totally unbalanced (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

An analysis of the process of class composition over two consecutive years led to the identification and ranking of the types of pupil most frequently rejected:

1) Pupils with special needs;
2) Pupils from ethnic minorities, especially if they did not speak Portuguese;
3) Pupils classified as deprived or difficult;
4) Male pupils (a feature mainly observed in Main school, where some classes had a boy/girl ratio of 1: 4).

It should, however, be mentioned that when the pupils were placed in their original classes, the attitude of rejection was considerably modified. Although the teachers did not believe in the academic potential of these pupils, they were concerned with their emotional welfare and that they should be fully integrated in the class and the school. They were sympathetic towards their problems, raised funds for study trips, devised 'scholarships' for English classes and LTA, and did their best to make them feel at ease in potentially embarrassing social situations (by asking for materials, masks and costumes for shows, clothes for parties, etc).

Contract teachers rarely spoke out about the selective nature of pupil distribution among the classes:

> The contract teacher is afraid because she is aware that she is not linked to the State. Because she is scared, she doesn't express her opinions. Contract teachers hold their peace when they should actually speak out (Sonia, contract teacher, Main school).

Their silence, however, was not motivated by fear alone:

> I sometimes think that if I am contracted, if I am only at this particular school for a few months, why should I declare war on the teachers? Even if they backed down, which they wouldn't, where would it have got me? The following year I'd have to start all over again at another school (Silvana, contract teacher, Main School).

Indeed, forced to "exit" annually, the younger teachers in the schools under analysis rarely played a part in the pedagogic and institutional renovation referred to in other studies (Ball, 1987). Rather they withdrew into their own group, as suggested by school boards (see Table 15, Chapter Four) and confirmed by the account of human relations in the school (see next section). Acceptance of the hierarchy was, anyway, an important part of teachers' 'hands-on' learning experience as they embarked on their career (see Lieberman *et al*, 1988). In their turn, the majority of senior teachers had no difficulty in finding justifications for the privileges they enjoyed at the end of their career:

> These young teachers are not aware of what we went through. They complain when they have a class of 25 or 26 pupils. I had up to double that, with four different levels" (Maria João, senior teacher, Main School).

> Nowadays they [young teachers] have 'perks' and find lots of problems already solved, on either a social or professional level, which we didn't in the past. You are aware of the teacher's status in the past, aren't you? We almost had no timetable. We used to get 40 pupils and we were expected to prepare them for the examination. Teacher evaluation was done on the basis of the results of those pupils. That was the criterion, a very stiff selection network. All we went through and fought for, they will never have to experience (...) People don't appreciate what it took to get things changed. For example, why do we make a small class when there are pupils with special needs in that group? Why is that? The Department of Education didn't do anything about it. It's because the teachers fought for and demanded it. There was an involvement, a concerted struggle to get what we demanded. And the reduction in class-size to 25 pupils? That was another difficult victory we really had to fight for (Sofia, senior teacher, Main School)[7].

Although undisputed by the younger teachers, the position of senior teachers was coming under threat from other directions. Indeed, as the research

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[7] According to this perspective, equality and hierarchy were not considered mutually exclusive. Equality among colleagues was the equality that came from the career cycle. This notion of

progressed, there was evidence (as already mentioned) of the emergence of a new foundation for the establishment of a teacher hierarchy: teachers' organisational "contribution". In point of fact, the directors of some schools had begun enthusiastically to espouse the new managerial orientations issued by the central administration: drafting of projects and socio-educational partnerships (see also Chapters 4 & 5). Thus was created the basis for a new and "meritocratic" hierarchy, based on participation in "special" projects and institutional investment.

> It's true that if a teacher prepares his pupils well, is punctual and conscientious, nobody can really touch him. But being a teacher today is far more than that. He has to join in other duties, participate in projects, devote more time to the school (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

Conflicts therefore began to arise, related to the high profile of certain teachers and certain projects. The 3L project, based at Main School, was particularly targeted. This was a joint project with the Lisbon Higher School of Education, the Department of Basic Education and some institutions abroad. It brought with it certain 'perks' for the only teacher involved: a computer in her classroom, a higher allowance for didactic material, foreign travel and receiving visitors, as well as a certain visibility in the pedagogic and administrative community. There was almost daily criticism backstage, culminating in various direct or indirect demands on the school management: removal of the computer to the library, limits on the expenses of the teacher to be paid out of the school budget, participation in the receiving of foreign guests and specialists from the central administration. The conflict dragged on bitterly for over a year.

The notoriety of this new kind of teacher, moulded in areas considered to be outside the classroom (everyone knew about serious "cases" in this teacher's class) was far from being institutionally pacific:

> There are teachers here who have a certain status because they're involved in high-profile projects or because they're somebody's little pet [i.e. management]. And then you discover that they're the ones with the biggest problems in the

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equality accepted, and in some ways presupposed, the hierarchy among individuals who were at different stages of their professional life

> classroom. They're supposed to be so brilliant . . . and then they can't even teach the pupils properly (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

In spite of all this, the teacher in question managed to maintain her position throughout her whole time in the school, thus illustrating the importance of the new forms of professional and organisational investment. It was the formal recognition of an enterprising spirit very different from the one that had driven the democratic management of schools:

> [during the revolution] it was different: we didn't operate in career terms. We used to work together and share everything. Not any more. Now, if anything, people say: "I do this or that and don't tell anyone about it (Sofia, senior teacher, Main School).

Human Relations in the School

Educational literature suggests that teachers need a warm and positive environment to mitigate their sense of isolation and the tension produced by the ambiguity and unpredictability of their professional duties (Lortie, 1975; Esteve, 1992). The social interactions observed in the course of this study suggest that the high index of educational segmentation in certain schools may be an obstacle to the development of an overall relaxed atmosphere. In these circumstances cordial relations could only be found in the micro-practices of cooperation already described. Collective relations, on the other hand, were superficial and, on occasion, uncomfortable. The interactions established in the teachers' rooms were particularly telling in this respect. They reflect, to a great extent, as has been pointed out by various authors (Kainan, 1994), the organisational "ethos" of a particular teaching institution.

Contained "Balkanisation"

In Main School, the reduced dimensions of the teachers' room, together with its multi-purpose nature - telephone, fax - made it an uninviting place to linger. However, the problems were not only of a functional nature. Indeed, the school

was firmly divided into *cliques* composed according to the teachers' position in the career structure (contract, permanent). Relations between these groups, although there was no overt hostility, were difficult (see bureaucratic conflicts, in this Chapter). For this reason, attempts to improve the premises and to foster fraternization had proved to be fruitless:

> In this school all you hear is, 'She's already in such-and-such a place on the syllabus, and I'm only here'. This year I thought we could change that a bit. That's why I had that coffee machine installed over there, so that we could all chat over our coffee. I got the machine, but that's as far as it went. Maybe the problem is the differing interests, if you see what I mean. Because what happens is either that everyone stands around in a deathly silence or else there's such a hubbub that you can't hear yourself speak. And the usual topic of conversation, of course, is the weather. There's no real liaison; it just can't be achieved (Maria, associate teacher, Main School).

One of the obstacles to easy socialization was the fact that, due to the cramped conditions, it was not possible physically to separate the different groups in the school. This is why the atmosphere in the morning break, when everyone was present in the school, was felt to be uncomfortable and why it in turn produced a 'spontaneous' movement whereby the room came to be used by different groups at different times. Some teachers stopped going to the teachers' room on a regular basis. Depending on particular preferences, they either chose to remain in their classrooms, to visit colleagues or to go out 'illegally' to cafés or other places in the neighbourhood. At lunchtime the teachers' room was the 'province' of the younger teachers, who had lunch in the school, or a group of associate teachers who mixed with them more frequently. Since most of the permanent teachers lived locally and went home for lunch, it was easy for the younger teachers to get together.

In the afternoon after classes, the teachers' room was the venue of a different type of 'clientele'. It became the meeting point for a few teachers whose support for the headteacher was well known. These teachers had been in the school for several years and showed all the signs of a heavy professional investment. They would come and go freely between the director's office and the teachers' room.

Conversations with the headteacher were invariably brief: messages, requests for information, some clearing of the air, and light-hearted and relaxed exchanges of opinion. But they did help to maintain cordiality, the sharing of information and a good relationship between the Board and its closest supporters. Senior teachers also had ease of access to the director's office. However, they rarely went into the teachers' room, (with the exception of the deputy head and those teachers who, for health reasons, were involved in administrative tasks).

Traces of the Past (Park School)

At Park School, the teachers' room was above all a stop-off point. Teachers would go through, rarely stopping for long, at different 'phases' of the morning break. Most elected to go at the end of the break to interact (very) briefly with their peers. Others, including the headteacher herself, who also had contact hours, made rare appearances.

'Old stories' (Herminia, Park school) rather than lack of space, were responsible for the social aloofness apparent among teachers of this school. These 'stories' included suspicion with regard to management of the school's finances, pressure and reprisals against colleagues through requests to the Board for 'information', and the presentation of formal complaints. During the period of observation, these tensions were gradually being relaxed, following the departure from the school of some of its more aggressive members:

> Teachers are starting to appear more in the teachers' room (Paulo, head teacher).
>
> My colleagues all say that this year was absolute bliss (Catarina, contract teacher).

The teachers' room was thus being used more and more, but relaxation never came to be the norm.

A 'fifty-fifty' school: *condemned to getting on with each other*

The two teachers of Avenue school met every morning in a room adjoining the schoolyard, which also functioned as the director's office (at lunchtime and after school). Professional relations were pleasant, albeit limited to school and schoolwork. The teachers organised study trips together, and, even during the sojourn of a substitute teacher, were very much at ease with each other. These observations confirm the greater possibility of social integration which some of the teachers interviewed attributed to smaller schools. It may also help to explain the higher rates of participation recorded for these schools (Borges *et al*, 1998). Such forms of professional collaboration between teachers could not however, be generalized. Indeed, in smaller schools, especially those located in difficult areas, "teachers have no choice but to get on with each other" (Carlota, headteacher). Structural constraints led to mutual support, it is a "question of survival" (Julia, teacher).

Thus, the social relations identified in primary schools revealed, above all, a high degree of isomorphism towards the professional patterns dealt with throughout this chapter. They reproduced, rather than contradicted, bureau-Fordist matrix presiding over the organisation of the Portuguese educational system.

CONCLUSIONS

The patterns of collegiality identified in Portuguese primary schools, during the final phase of the *democratic management* of schools, are in sharp contrast to the "participatory explosion" that followed the implementation of democracy in Portugal (Stoer, 1986; Lima, 1992). The formal structure of the primary school management model, which preserved important symbols of the democratic transition, has not prevented significant changes from taking place on the level of participation and professional interaction between teachers. In the wake of a

period of "talk, talk, nothing but talk"[8] has come a time when there reigns, on occasions, a "deathly silence" (Maria, associate teacher, Main school). It is impossible to understand the marked discontinuities identified in the dynamics of Portuguese schools without reference to the social and political processes that have influenced the country during the past twenty-five years: democracy, revolution, normalisation, globalisation. This statement makes it possible to reiterate the reservation expressed at the beginning of this chapter with regard to those organizational concepts, which effectively advocate collegiality as if this were a management technology whose *modus operandi* was independent of its context. Indeed, the Portuguese experience in the realm of school administration shows that teachers are not, intrinsically, individualistic, collegiate or corporative. Depending on the particular context, any one of these characteristics may prevail. "Cultural identities are not rigid, let alone unchangeable" (Santos, 1994, p119). The current defence of collegiate models would thus seem to be based on a decontextualized, 'cartesian' concept of professional identities and organizational dynamics. The credibility of this concept has been systematically undermined in a wide range of historical, social and anthropological studies. The current research constitutes a further critical contribution.

The research also made it possible to identify continuities and discontinuities between the patterns of collegiality typifying Portuguese primary schools and the organizational and professional dynamics operating in other contexts.

I shall therefore begin by affirming that the professional concepts and patterns of collegiality that emerge from the present study are largely congruent with features of the bureaucratic and professional models described by several authors (Lortie, 1975; Lieberman *et al*, 1988; Gewirtz, 2002). Indeed, Portuguese primary teachers present a relatively rich and diversified professional matrix. This matrix emphasises, fundamentally, the importance of the relationship with the child, the global nature of educational relations, the social importance of the profession and the fundamental nature of learning at this level of education.

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[8] Pintassilgo, Português ex-primer Minister

This definition is interesting as much for what it includes, at its core, as for what it leaves out. Included are the pupils, the pedagogic work and the social role of the school. Excluded are the organizational aspects, 'extended' curricular management, personal and professional development of the teacher, scientific and academic knowledge, and relations with peers and with the community. Portuguese teachers thus fell, at the phase under analysis, into the paradigm of 'restricted professionalism' (Hoyle, 1974), which has been considered typical of teachers' professional culture (Little, 1990; Lieberman *et al*, 1988). The differences that may be highlighted, according to the present study, include, from the perspective of compared education, two main aspects.

In the first place, the almost universal nature of the reference to the children as a reason for entering the profession and as the main source of job satisfaction. The proportions assumed by this phenomenon in Portugal seem to transcend those apparent in other countries (Lortie, 1975). While not intending to establish causal relationships, which, by its qualitative nature would be beyond the scope of this study, we will simply mention *en passant* the extremely high percentage of women at this level of teaching (Araujo, 1992), the 'non-academic' image traditionally attributed to it (Monica, 1978), a narrower definition of primary education in Portugal (K stage 1 and 2) and the absence of a clear redefinition of the role of primary teaching in the wake of the 25th April (Sarmento, 1998).

The second difference noted during the present study concerns the way in which 'comprehensive values' (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995) were interpreted by Portuguese primary teachers. Indeed, the ethic of public service, which is a feature of bureau-professional regimes, generally implies a primacy of 'comprehensive' values over 'market values' (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Cribb, 1998). Although this primacy was clearly established as existing in the schools under analysis, "comprehensive values" seemed to include almost exclusively socio-emotional aspects. This interpretation of the comprehensive school, although referred to in the specialist literature as a feature of particular individuals or groups (Lortie, 1975; Gomes, 1992), is not usually seen as constituting a widely disseminated cultural pattern.

This study revealed, on the contrary, a *generalised* disbelief, on the part of Portuguese primary teachers, in the meritocratic function of the state school. The belief that, academically, "the school cannot compensate society" (Bernstein, 1982) has become clear on various occasions throughout this chapter: in the accounts of 'cases', in the micro-political activity designed to guarantee the pick of the best pupils, in the reasons put forward for choosing Main school (a upper and middle class school).

The present study further revealed a growing contradiction between the ethic of public service behind the choice of profession and the social importance attached to it. This situation, which is reflected in an increasing ambivalence towards the duties involved, is particularly evident among young teachers working in middle-to-upper class environments (Main school). Even so, it is possible to speak in general terms of the existence of a strong professional identity among primary teachers. Indeed, this identity is in striking contrast with their marked reluctance to participate in the organizational aspects of the schools in which they teach. A teacher's trajectory through the education system, for example, is determined by factors 'extrinsic' to the culture and dynamic of the school: proximity to home, sociological composition of the school population, services available in the area. It is interesting to note, moreover, that none of the issues central to the educational debate of recent decades - leadership, ethos, professional development, collegiality, projects - were presented as factors worth mentioning in this trajectory (see organisational identity). We can thus confirm the opinion of Rita (headteacher, Main school) when she asserted that "the spirit of the school isn't at large out there" and that she was "tired of being the lone standard-bearer" (for the school).

'Indifference' towards educational philosophies of an organizational matrix was not displayed solely on the discursive and ideological front. It was also evident in the shabbiness and 'symbolic nudity' of the communal areas in Portuguese schools: teachers' room, bar, gymnasiums, libraries, and corridors. These were merely 'passage-rooms' and presented no challenge whatsoever to the

traditional primacy of the classroom or to the segmentation of educational activity.

Indeed, practices of segmentation of educational activity - consolidated and constrained - made up the dominant patterns of interaction in the schools under analysis. Needless to say, this does not mean that practices of professional cooperation were absent in the same schools. It merely means that the *way* these professional interactions were conducted was very different from the *way* advocated in contemporary organizational literature. The 'vision' and the 'mission', which should be inherent in the functioning of collegiate structures (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, 1998) only "exist" in the documents required by law (area school project, school regulations).

The practices of cooperation actually identified were only marginally in line with formal collegiate structures. They were similar to the collaboration cultures described by Hargreaves (1998) in that they were spontaneous, voluntary and non-formalized. Irrespective of the level of cooperation achieved, the professional autonomy of each of the team members was clearly inviolate. Decisions taken were in no sense binding. What 'worked' or 'didn't work' in group/class terms was what determined, in the final analysis, decisions as to whether or not to implement 'agreements' reached within the peer-group. As a result of this 'dialogue with the situation' (Huberman, 1993), joint decisions could be freely modified, deferred or even reversed.

The spirit of freedom, which pervaded voluntary cooperation between teachers also, applied to other aspects of collegiality. There was even a great deal of licence with regard to the practices of educational segmentation, which many teachers continued to favour. The extent of professional interaction between colleagues was considered, except by the executive board and its staunch supporters, to be 'a matter of personal choice' (Lortie, 1975, p194).

The apparent fragility of these processes of voluntary cooperation between peers - the almost microscopic proportions of the group, the absence of formalization, the virtually unlimited freedom enjoyed by each member of the group - did not prevent these forms of interaction from lasting for years or from

having a considerable effect on patterns of teacher mobility (either by encouraging teachers to stay or to make concerted efforts to move on).

The organizational impact of these kinds of relationship was, however, minimal: firstly, because they focused on pedagogic rather than organizational issues; second, far from eroding the 'egg-crate' structure of the schools, they strategically modified it to mitigate its more adverse effects: personal, professional and organizational isolation.

The forms of cooperation identified in the present study have, in spite of everything, the advantage of demonstrating that teachers are not intrinsically individualistic. On the contrary, they are capable of establishing and carefully maintaining forms of collegiality 'geared to development' (Hargreaves, 1998).

The areas in which peer cooperation was found (the quest for personal and professional support, development of pedagogic support structures) and the attitudes underlying them (unconditional respect for others, for different practices and for the diversity of educational contexts) further serve to illustrate the enormous gulf which separates these practices from contemporary collegiate guidelines. The latter advocate, above all, organizational unity, acceptance of leadership, administrative rationalization and modernisation and development of evaluation procedures (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, 1998; OCDE, 1995). Teachers' cultural conceptions are so different that it becomes hard to accept the allegations of professional 'empowerment' that run through so much of the discourse on 'school autonomy'.

Finally, I should mention that the predominance of practices of segmentation and spontaneous cooperation in Portuguese primary schools did not mean that they had remained immune from the educational policies and public discourses that have increasingly supported new concepts of collegiate professionalism. The influence of these new organizational concepts makes itself felt mainly in two ways: in the cultural domain and in the relationships of power and prestige prevailing in Portuguese primary schools.

In the cultural domain, we can see an almost generalized assimilation of the concepts that advocate the 'imperatives' of teamwork. This assimilation,

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In the cultural domain, we can see an almost generalized assimilation of the concepts that advocate the 'imperatives' of teamwork. This assimilation,

however, was still extremely superficial and associated with an attitude of marked complacency towards the 'constraints' - personal, professional and systemic - which stood in the way of teamwork. Besides which, the desired type of cooperation was mainly concerned with pedagogic rather than administrative matters. The importance of the organization continued to be a concept foreign to the dominant professional culture in primary schools. There, however, groups in these same schools who showed that they had already taken on board important aspects of the new organizational perspectives. These groups were mainly drawn from two socio-professional categories:

- school directors, directly or indirectly professionalized (exemption from contact hours, elected for several mandates);
- special education teachers who, in conformity with current Portuguese legislation, played an essentially advisory role.

Nevertheless, in the phase under analysis, the bureaucratic hierarchies still made up the dominant nucleus in primary schools and their compartmentalised structure continued to be quite strong. Teachers argued in favour of teamwork, but their educational activity was still carried out on a largely segmented basis.

It may therefore be concluded that, in the final phase of democratic management, Portuguese primary teachers used the formal and informal structures of participation mainly to safeguard the plurality and independence of their professional practices. Resorting to various types of teamwork in some cases mitigated the personal, professional and institutional isolation that might be the result of such an orientation.

The bureaucratic and professional concepts, which dominated the profession, have begun, meanwhile, to give way to new professional and managerial ideas centred on endorsement of organizational unity, pedagogic and administrative modernisation and community participation. The argument for the new professionalism was put forward in 'gentle' language, appealing to the values of unity, community and participation. There was no doubt, nevertheless, that in the final phase of democratic management, there were signs in Portuguese state schools of the competition "between diverse conceptions of common good

[public interest, business logic, community logic] and more importantly the struggle between them for legitimacy" (Leliéver, 2000, p9)

This phenomenon of convergence with the processes of educational restructuring tried out in other countries exerted greater or lesser influence on the different schools. The extent of the transformation was, as we shall see in the next chapter, directly connected with the professionalization of the leadership and with the patterns of community involvement.

CHAPTER FOUR
LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL PARTICIPATION

This chapter aims to analyse the power relations and processes of participation that dominated the running of Portuguese primary schools during the final phase of the *democratic school management*. It is therefore an attempt to understand the plurality of interests at work in local educational contexts. Indeed, due to the diversity of local actors, the process of transfer of powers must inevitably be the object of political and sociological analysis. Different local actors might benefit from new autonomies opportunities for action. Afonso identifies three models of SBM, each one with a different focus of empowerment:

> The model that centres on the school manager, in which the powers devolved to the school tend to be concentrated on the managing structure; the model centred on the teachers, in which a major part of the decision-making power is invested in internal collegiate bodies overseen by the teachers; and the model centred on the community, in which community members - parents, guardians and representatives of local interests - have considerable "say" in the running of the school (Afonso, 1999, pp 60-61; see also Chapter 1).

In order to contextualize this analysis, reference will then be made to certain aspects of the intense debate which in recent decades has surrounded the issue of school leadership and the role of families in education (section 1). An attempt will therefore be made, in the first place, to identify and describe the model of local management prevailing in Portugal by the end of the democratic management of the schools (section 2). Particular emphasis will be given, in accordance with the goals of this study, to the role of school managers (section 3) and "customers" (section 4) in the running of primary schools.

The New Managerial Perspectives: the Centrality of Leaders and the Power of the "Customers".

New "Headship" : Transformational Leadership or Neo-Managerialism?

The dissemination of SBM models has produced enormous expectations in relation to the development and transformation of the role of school managers. Indeed, writers employing neo-liberal educational perspectives have argued, on the basis of "lessons" learned from successful international corporations, in favour of the need to distinguish between two areas of organisational intervention: "the first consists of assuming responsibilities, executing, accomplishing, directing; the second of guiding, exerting influence, focusing attention on the basic objectives and on global strategy, having vision" (Bárrios, 1999, p94). The first area of intervention has been associated with the traditional idea of the nature of management or leadership. The second implies a new kind of leadership which gives greater attention to ethical and cultural issues - meanings and values - and involves commitment to organisational development.

> Earlier views about the nature of leadership itself were rather constrained and superficial, tending to emphasize the exercise of formal authority in achieving the goals of the school (...) More recently, we have gained a deeper appreciation of leadership by examining the relationship between leaders and other members of staff, noting the importance of meanings which are derived from the leadership acts (...) It seems that emphasis should be given to transforming rather than transactional leadership, with the intent being to change attitudes and bring about "commitment" to "a better state", which is embodied in a vision of excellence for the school (Beare *et al*, 1997, p37).

The importance given to the vision of the leader constitutes a fundamental characteristic of neo-managerial literature (Crawford *et al*, 1997; Dunford *et al*, 2000) and also one which comes in for heavy criticism. Indeed, beneath an appearance of innovation and scientificity, the image that all too frequently

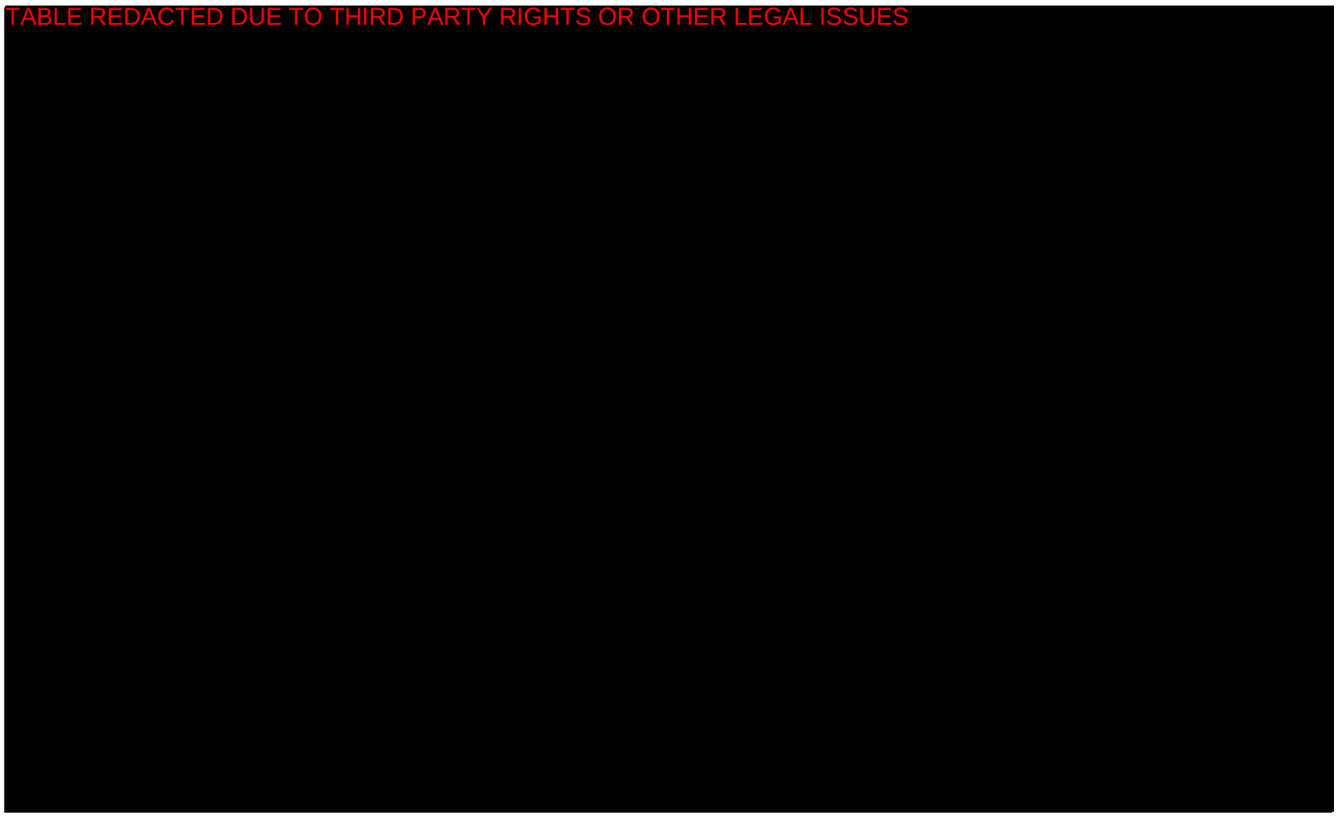
comes through in this literature is not so far removed from that of the "hero" who featured in the classical approaches to organisations (see trait approach, Jesuíno, 1987). Moreover, as was the case in these early studies, the relationships between the leader and the group are defined in markedly paternalistic terms. The "vision" not only emanates from the leader but should permeate all the organisational structures and processes, thus endowing "the ordinary with dramatic significance" (Beare *et al*, 1997, p34). This attitude to organisational dynamics suggests that power relations may be concealed beneath the more politically acceptable designation of leadership (Watkins, 1989). From a democratic point of view, it clearly makes little sense that the school leader should unilaterally define the basic values and the future of the organization. The role of the democratic leader will be closer, as pointed out by Barber (1984) to that of a "facilitator" committed to the development of processes of "critical participation" within organisations (Friedberg, 1988). With this in mind, the role of leader would not involve the definition and communication of organisational objectives, but support of the school community in the process of "creating and developing its own identity" (Watkins, 1989). The neo-liberal concepts of management in education, on the other hand, through advocating strong or "transformational" (Burns, 1978) leaderships, do no more than convey, to the majority of members of the organisation, an illusion of power and participation:

> In many ways the concept of leadership has been chewed up and swallowed down by the needs of modern managerial theory. The idea of leadership as a transforming practice, as an empowering of followers, and as a vehicle for social change has been taken, adapted and co-opted by managerial writers so that leadership appears as a way of improving organisations, not of transforming our world (...) The transformational leader is now a popular concept for organisations (Ticky and Devanna, 1986). But the concept has been denuded of its original power; transformational leaders are now those who can lead a company to greater profits, who can satisfy the material cravings of employees, who can achieve better performance through providing the illusion of power to subordinates (Foster, 1989, p45).

The role attributed to the leader is not, however, the only aspect of neo-liberal concepts to come in for criticism. Indeed, various authors have shown - historically, politically and sociologically - the reductionist nature of these concepts (Foster, 1989; Grace, 1995; Power *et al*, 1997; Gewirtz, 2002). These authors contend that what is needed are "studies of school leadership which are historically located and which are brought into a relationship with wider political, cultural, economic and ideological movements of society" (Grace, 1995, p5). Their contribution is apparent in a number of areas: distinction between the concepts of leadership and management to clarify the historically contingent nature of these concepts and the elitist nature of the new concepts of leadership, explicit in the assumption of the leader's superior vision and ethics. Besides this, they have drawn attention to the growing "subordination" of bureau-professional concepts to the market values produced by the educational commodification which accompanied the neo-liberal perspectives on education.

Certain of these authors have at the same time systematically documented the thoroughgoing process of restructuring the work of school managers and teachers which is taking place in contemporary societies (Power *et al*, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Woods *et al*, 1997; Menter *et al*, 1997; Arnott *et al*, 2000; Gewirtz, 2001; van Zanten, 2002; Whitty, 2002; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). Accordingly, they refer, in opposition to the abstract concepts of transformational leadership, to the emergence of a new concept, which they call "corporate managerialism" or "neo-managerialism". This new dialectic is based on a market "ethic" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Cribb, 1998; Gewirtz, 2002) which incorporates itself in a complex way with traditional professional values and which increasingly superimposes itself upon them (see Table 12).

Table 12 - Values drift



(Adapted from Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p150)

The change of paradigm brought about by this subordination, summarized in Table 12, is the source of innumerable transformations daily affecting school organisations. "Teachers, and in particular directors, are beginning to talk different languages: pedagogy, marketing, finance. They are becoming 'multilingual' and learning to 'talk management'" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p99). Moreover, the principles of participatory education are giving way to the pragmatism and imperatives of "speed of decision-making" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Moore, 2001; Gewirtz, 2002). At the same time there is an increasing importance attached to the school image and the creation of new semiologies of schooling (Ball, 2000).

This trend may have more or less profound effects on the organisational dynamics of schools, generating processes of either "reorientation" or "colonization", according to whether or not assimilation of the language and logic of the market implies major changes to the values, processes or activities of the organisation (McLaughlin, 1991; Gewirtz *et al*, 1995).

Apart from all this, management structures - directors and senior teachers - may respond in different ways to the "demands" of the market:

> One method involves a kind of role distancing, a degree of cynicism in "acting out " but not taking seriously a position or perspective (...) Another strategy adopted by reluctant bilinguals is to carve a space within the new discourse in which to pursue traditional professional concerns. This involves arguing that market related activities can have a duality of purposes, where one set of purposes is commercial, and another educational, and that, approached in the right way, the two can be reconciled. Thus a number of senior managers talked about the positive side of marketing (...) Linked to this is a tendency for senior managers to distinguish between acceptable forms of marketing which do not involve compromising traditionally -held educational values and principles and unacceptable forms of marketing, which do (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, pp102-103).

The relationships between educational institutions and the market are in fact extremely complex. Among other reasons for this complexity, four essential factors stand out. In the first place, there is the influence of cultural and political traditions, which explains why in certain countries there is little support for a direct appeal to market logic as a means of restructuring schools. In southern-European countries, for example, as has already been mentioned, reforms are viewed more euphemistically, as necessities arising from the modernization, diversification and openness of the educational systems (Derouet & Dutercq 1992; Afonso, 1999; Dias, 1999). Secondly, in spite of recognition of global societal influences, local considerations cannot be underestimated: the specific nature of the local "market" and the reputation of the schools. The attitude of local actors is recognized as playing an important role in the process of school restructuring. Indeed, empirical research has shown great diversity in the reactions of schools to pressure to "marketize" education, even producing ways of resisting this pressure.

Thirdly, we should not forget the loosely-coupled nature of schools and, in particular, the gulf which exists between organisational and pedagogic functions. Thus, identification with the new administrative philosophies and

procedures seems to be restricted to the management team, and a small group of "emergent professionals" (Wallace, 1992; Pollard *et al*, 1994; Power *et al*, 1997). The main activities of the school are thus to a large extent shielded from the new political and societal persuasions.

Finally, it should also be remembered that the closing years of the twentieth century were marked by a frenzy of activity in the process of educational reconstruction and a resulting "epidemic" of educational policies. This "hurly-burly of change" (Formosinho & Ferreira, 1998) helped to divide the attention and investment of social actors. It also increased the "schizophrenic" potential of organisations and the possibility of different lifeworlds co-existing in the same school (Laughlin, 1991; Ball, 1992).

Despite these reservations, there is every indication that, in most economically advanced capitalist societies, there has been an important redistribution of power among the main local actors: teachers, headteachers and parents (Gewirtz *et al* 1995; Menter *et al*, 1997; Power *et al*, 1997; Smyth *et al*, 2000; Van Zanten, 2002). In this process the advocacy of consumer rights played an important role (Almond, 1994; Brown, 1994; Dale & Robertson, 2001; Whitty, 2002).

Family involvement in schools: expression of citizenship or sovereignty of the consumer?

The power of parents to participate in decisions involving their children's education constitutes a virtually undisputed right in contemporary societies (Davies *et al*, 1989; Laughlin, 1994). However, legal sanction is a relatively recent reality. For decades, parents were essentially "partners", working in a supporting role with professional educators (Anderson, 1993; Vincent, 1996, 2000):

- helping with school work and creating favourable conditions for its completion;

- instilling values and attitudes conducive to school achievement ("spending time with the children, talking to them about what they did at school, [generating] pride in work well done, application and moderate ambition"; Marques, 1995, p24).
- encouraging specific cultural practices (e.g. visits to museums, exhibitions, concerts).

Through these forms of interaction, family involvement in the school became a sign of "good practice" and a decisive factor in pupils' school success, besides also being regarded as a valuable contribution to the development of democracy (Marques, 1991, Davies *et al*, 1993, Abrantes, 1994). Some authors went so far as to consider that family involvement might serve to counteract the "reproductive" logic of the school:

> Contrary to the contentions of Marxist educational sociologists in the sixties and seventies, school success does not depend principally on differences in social class, but on a broad set of interacting variables that includes familiarity with the school culture and the acquisition of attitudes favourable to success... [These] are to be found in all walks of life and in any case constitute powerful variables in educational achievement (Marques, 1993, p24).

Despite such convictions, the major forms of school/family relations existing in recent decades have proved to be highly vulnerable to the patterns of social, cultural and ethnic inequality persisting in contemporary societies (Slee *et al*, 1998; Reay, 1998, 2001; Silva, 2001; Vincent, 2001; Van Zanten, 1996, 2002).

The educational advantages associated with family participation in the school were not, however, the only reasons behind the advocacy of the parental involvement that appeared in the sixties. Such practices were even presented by some authors as a way of combating the "paternalism" and the bureaucratisation of public institutions:

> The critiques [of public sector professionals] have been concerned to expose the "myth" that these professionals are benign agents involved in relationships with clients and unaffected by the structural inequalities which are embedded in wider society and based on class, ethnicity and/or gender". Welfare state professionals have been castigated for their

> paternalism, their belief that the services they provide were benign and in the best interests of their clients (Vincent, 2000, p42).

This critique led to a variety of experiments in the field of school/community relations, both in the more developed western countries and in countries of the Third World (Davies *et al*, 1981; Benavente *et al*, 1987). In some cases, alternative pedagogic concepts were developed whose influence is still far from dying out (for example, the Paulo Freire model). Generally speaking, however, this first phase in the opening up of school/community relations was powerless to avoid a strong social bias. In addition, the community voice was frequently ineffectual against the power of managerial/professional authority, which placed families in an essentially supporting role in relation to the school and the professionals (Vincent, 1996; Silva, 2001).

Criticism of the welfare state and its professionals reappeared in the mid-eighties, although this time virtually devoid of any perspective of radical change in the patterns of social inequality (see Chapter 1). Neo-liberal concepts in education are in fact based on an individualistic attitude "[that] denies the effect of class, ethnicity and gender stratifications, and instead maintains that everyone has an equal chance to succeed, and responsibility for that success (or failure) is their own" (Vincent, 1996, p36). The citizen is basically regarded as a consumer who should be responsible (and answerable) for the choices he makes. The role of the State is principally to break down the barriers to free market operation: attendance of schools within the area of residence, public spending based on criteria of a "bureaucratic" or social nature (number of pupils, positive discrimination).

When the system is deregulated, the citizen-consumer is encouraged and legitimated to act in line with the principles that, according to the attitudes under analysis, are supposed to characterize him: self-interest, rationality and utility. His reasoned choices will help, it is argued, towards the growth of quality schools and the extinction of the rest (or restructuring).

Consumer opinion, to which neo-liberal attitudes claim to give voice, is however very different from the voice of the citizen which featured in the concerns of the progressive educators of the seventies and eighties. It is a voice which resounds mainly *between* educational institutions rather than *within* them. It is the voice of those who choose/evaluate rather than construct/participate. Indeed, the main strength of the citizen-consumer lies neither in the power of his voice nor in any collective action which he may set in motion. It lies rather in the consequences of the choices he "collectively" makes. It should be stressed, however, that the "efficacy" of neo-liberal perspectives does not depend solely on the more or less automatic functioning of the legal mechanisms institutionalised in recent decades: choice, vouchers system. Part of the influence exerted by these views, perhaps the more significant, is cultural. It is cultural changes which pave the way for and consolidate transformations effected on the social and political plane. This is why theories concerning the sovereignty of the consumer are so closely tied up with the "discursive construction of good" or "appropriate parenting" (Vincent, 2000; Gewirtz, 2001). Indeed, while not actually initiating this process of construction, current managerial concepts have clearly encouraged it. The roles (and obligations) of mothers and fathers are today almost infinite, and susceptible to constant investment and improvement.

In theory it is possible for anyone to become a good parent (Vincent, 2000). Failure to do so is therefore clearly a personal matter. And this is why the concepts behind parental choice of schools, and other forms of "marketization" of education, have repercussions which transcend the educational field:

- they alter the frontiers between state and family, putting more responsibility on the family and taking off some of the pressure on the political system;
- they make possible a conservative redefinition of the relations between the state, the local authorities and the teachers. Indeed, the increased power of the consumer has on various occasions gone hand in hand with

a loss of influence on the part of teachers and local authorities (Sarmento *et al*, 1999; Lima, 2001).

Despite this apparent neutrality, neo-liberal concepts have proved to be powerful tools for social and political reform.

Finally, it should be stressed that the new administrative guidelines are far from benefiting all consumers on equal terms:

> Parental choice policies overlook the way in which individuals differ markedly in their ownership of social and economic resources: differences which profoundly affect their ability to compete in the educational market (Vincent, 1996, p35).

Thus the new parental choice policies will very probably lead to a strengthening of the old social hierarchies (Lauder *et al*, 1999; Derouet, 2000, 2002, Ball, 2003). Moreover, even if the issue of inequality did not exist, which is far from being the case, parental choice would always be curbed by the possibility of the more popular schools making their own selection of pupils.

In conclusion, in spite of the abstract rhetoric of empowerment which accompanies the new educational policies, the latter contain undeniable risks for the majority of local actors: teachers, local authorities, families with fewer cultural and social resources. Furthermore, the "marketization" of education would seem to have consequences which reach far beyond the educational system itself.

> The growing tendency to base aspects of social issues more and more on the notion of consumer rights instead of the rights of citizens, implies more than the movement of public educational systems towards individual schools competing in the client market. While apparently responding to criticism of the impersonal and over-bureaucratic service provided by the welfare state, it also alters primordial aspects of political decision-making, taking it from the public into the private sector with potentially significant consequences in terms of social justice. Atomised decision-making within an already stratified society may appear to ratify the concept of equal opportunities for all, whereas in fact it reduces the possibility of the collective struggles which may help those less able to help themselves (Whitty, 1996, p127).

I shall now examine to what extent the new neo-liberal orientations outlined above have been reflected in Portuguese primary schools.

The Democratic Management of Portuguese Schools

In this section I shall analyse the ongoing changes in the processes of formal participation in the schools under analysis. In this way, it is my intention to illustrate the contingent nature, both historically and culturally, of some of the basic concepts of contemporary political discourse: "leadership", "participation", "school culture"; and also to describe and document the beginning of a process of comprehensive redefinition of the role of leadership in Portuguese schools.

School Board: Functions, Policies and Practices

Contemporary literature abounds with references to strong and charismatic leaders capable of promulgating and imposing their vision and sense of mission. This image could not be further from the legal framework defining the running of Portuguese schools during the democratic management of schools (see table 13).

Table 13 -Principal Organs and Functions

Functions of the School Board	Functions of the Headteacher
To draw up the school regulations; To adjudicate, as far as the law permits, matters of importance to the school; To draw up and submit to a higher authority proposals for dealing with problems outside their legal jurisdiction; To collaborate with the regional offices.	To represent the school; To preside over teachers' meetings; To decide on matters delegated by the Board, or in an emergency; To carry out the deliberations of the school board; to oversee the discipline of the school; To collaborate with the regional offices.

A study of Table 13 shows the formal subordination of the head teacher in relation to the body of teachers comprising the school board. The teachers not only elect the head teacher but hold, collectively, practically all the responsibilities delegated in schools. The head teacher is little more than a figurehead, liasing with higher authorities and making decisions in an emergency.

Teachers interviewed attested that, broadly speaking, schools function according to the power relationship shown in Table 13.

> The head teacher hasn't got a class, so she takes on other responsibilities. She will do a job which it is impossible for the others to do because we have a class, *but she always asks the others what they think,* i.e. us! In some situations she does enjoy a degree of autonomy. For example, she can organise a school visit and *then* ask us what we think, or *even* buy materials. In the end she is like the administrator of a block of flats, but with some autonomy (Adriana, associate teacher, Main School, my emphasis).

The head teachers themselves were unanimous in recognising the "hierarchical primacy" of the school board:

> In this model, the role of headteacher is quite restricted. The headteacher has to pass all the issues to the school board. And the most difficult questions lie with the delegate (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

> Because of current legislation, there is little regard for the power of a headteacher (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

Although the supremacy of the school board may be attributed to the lack of official power held by head teachers, it is not the only factor involved in defining the headteacher role. There were, in fact, during the period of the research, other factors which contributed to this definition:

- *system of representation*

Having been elected by their peers, directors saw themselves more as their representatives than as their superiors (interview with Rita, April 1999). Moreover, given the general disinterest in organisational aspects (see Chapter 3), the head found it difficult to be seen and accepted as the representative of

the general interests of the organisation. Indeed, some teachers referred explicitly to the head teacher's job as "being there to support us", "not siding with the parents" and "not paying too much attention to parents" (extracts from interviews, Main School).

- bureaucratic and centralist tradition:

The marked educational centralization of the Portuguese educational system has always stood in the way of strong local leaderships (Lima, 1992). This state of affairs remained unchanged after the democratic transition, given that it created an anti-authoritarian climate which, albeit for different reasons, was equally a barrier to the assertion of local leadership. Indeed, this anti-authoritarian climate, at times considered excessive, is often referred to in interviews:

> Most heads just follow the mainstream (Teresa, senior teacher, Park School).
>
> As head teachers go, I've seen them all. But most of them just go with the tide (Maria, associate teacher, Main School).

In the period prior to 1998, the lack of special qualifications for the post of head teacher, also contributed to the supremacy of school board in the local context.

The Definition of "School" Policies

The importance attributed to the school board, by the teachers and headteachers interviewed, raised certain hopes and expectations that it would constitute an effective forum for deciding school policies. This possibility was also the most likely explanation for the high participation -rates, at school board meetings, revealed in a recent survey of primary teachers in the city of Lisbon (Borges *et al*, 1998). The results of this survey, furnished by the Lisbon Municipality for the purposes of this study, show a remarkable degree of involvement on the part of teachers in defining issues essential to the everyday life of the school: aims, rules, assessment (see Table 14).

Table 14 - Teacher participation in decision-making

Area	Rate of participation %
Educational aims	85
Grading	84
School rules	77
Disciplinary problems	75

However, it would come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Portuguese schools, that the impression conveyed by the above table contrasts sharply with the organisational reality identified in the present study. Indeed, a systematic observation of various school board meetings leads to the conclusion that most of the issues mentioned in Table 14 were barely touched upon and, when they were, it was on the most superficial level (criticising or suggesting changes to wording or punctuation, disagreement with the use of certain expressions). The "high" or "very high" level of participation boiled down, in most cases, to listening point by point while the school regulations were read out - school project, school area project, rules - in an attitude of marked indifference (field-notes of July 98, Main school; fieldnotes of October 99, Park school). Many of those interviewed also admitted their indifference to "the type of issue that never gets off the ground" (Celeste, contract teacher, Main School).

Consequently, attempts to set up working groups to perform organisational tasks always met with stubborn resistance. This resistance was so strong that some teachers (Park school) even went as far as to check with the regional office the requirement to cooperate on this kind of task, in spite of this attitude being considered a breach of loyalty to colleagues on the Board. Strangely, the task of redesigning school policies proved to be even less appealing than that of performing mundane administrative tasks:

> So I started to see that there was one colleague to check the phone bills and another those of the photocopier. And I thought, *I'll be last,* because I was last in, and that's the normal

> pecking order. So as I knew that *nobody wanted that project thing* [the school project], *I volunteered.* Besides, I didn't want anything that would take up the whole year, because I knew I was going to have a lot to do at the ESE (training course). It suited me to have something I could *get out of the way* now, in September, and that I wouldn't have to do all year. So I did everything in September. *I explained what I was doing at two teachers' meetings, but nobody even commented* (Hermínia, senior school, Park School).

Thus, somewhat ironically, one could go so far as to say that participation in the overall policy-making of the school is more than "very high". It is excessive. It is excessive because it is to a large extent required - by law or by a public discourse which emphasises organisational change - in a world of respondents in which the values of "restricted professionality" are clearly those that prevail (see Chapter 3). The discrepancy between the results of the municipal survey and those of the present study does, however, provide valuable insights for an understanding of the professional culture of Portuguese teachers and of the workings of the Portuguese educational system in the last decade.

In the first place, while claiming a high level of participation in matters in which their decision-making power is virtually nil, given the strict regulations by which they are bound, the teachers interviewed revealed a high level of acceptance of their dependence. This phenomenon has already been identified in other studies (Afonso, 2000) and is likewise clearly evident in the whole process of drafting and approving "school documents", which frequently reiterate word for word objectives, proposals and considerations lifted from the current (centrally defined) legislation, regulations and curricula.

Secondly, it shows that the change in political discourse that took place in Portugal in the mid-eighties, in the sense of setting a higher value on local actors and ventures, had little effect on the attitudes and practices of primary teachers. Legislative initiatives of a compulsory nature - school project, plan of activities, regulations which were designed to produce less segmented educational activity, had almost no effect on teachers. The latter had a very

sketchy knowledge of the school's regulations and internal directives, the drafting of which they would generally leave to the head teacher. The principal rules were not even handed to all teachers: after their reading and approval, they were simply filed away. They could not even be consulted or referred to by the generality of teachers. Their use was restricted to the head and deputy head who, on occasion, would make them available to the administration - central or local - and to certain important social partners. The influence of these documents on the day-to-day life of the school was virtually nil:

> All schools *have to have a project,* don't they? But the teachers are busy all year *teaching their syllabus,* and just don't have time *for that sort of thing* (Silvana, associate teacher, Main School).

> I heard about the school project from colleagues. I didn't read it. For me it's something remote and very hard to get to grips with (Vanessa, contract teacher, Main School).

> I have very little to do with the school project [learning to be by being]. Sometimes I talk about it when dealing with *instances of misbehaviour among the children* (Sonia, contract teacher, Main School).

There were also cases in which the favoured *modus operandi* was in total contrast to the goals which the regulations sought to achieve: the school project, for example, which ideally should unite the teachers around a common theme or problem, was often split up into different topic areas which the teachers approached in a completely autonomous fashion.

> The school has its project, the core of which is the environment. And it's *divided.* My class has the pedagogic garden; another year chose the sanctuary, and so it goes on (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

> So we *divided up the project.* There are lots of different sides to the problem, like the garden, horticulture, audiovisuals, etc... ... so depending on each teacher's likes and dislikes, *they are free to choose what they want to do* (Barbara, senior teacher, Park School).

In other cases, like Avenue School, the educational project, "Learning better from the community" amounted to a total negation of the practice of the

organisation: so it was not surprising that it failed to lead to any concrete results (see "family relations").

It may therefore be concluded that the concepts of educational project and school autonomy, in spite of their intrinsic objectives, failed to generate new ways of organising work, based on the idea of making actors participate in the running of affairs in which they were actually involved (see also Estevão, 1995). The attitude of teachers towards overtures made with the aim of encouraging more "active" participation in the running of schools - projects, plans, regulations - was not so very different from the one displayed towards other rulings: they complied with the formalism, with the minimum of effort.

In some cases there is even the *in toto* adoption of documents produced by other schools. The regulations governing Main school, for example, were requested by another school that was awaiting an inspection:

> Two colleagues from school L came and asked for them because they didn't have any and were afraid the inspectors would raise problems (Rita, headteacher, Main school).

There are also cases in which documents are drawn up in their entirety by anyone who shows a flair for the job:

> We have a colleague who is very good at these things (plan of activities), so we leave them to her. She drafted this plan (Cristina, headteacher of pre-school annex to Main School).

This kind of organisational pseudo-participation was generally widespread. Sarmento, in a study which included three primary schools in the North of the country, identified the same phenomenon, which he called the "ceremonial" function of the school board. Through its ceremonial role, which is apparent above all in matters relating to school organisation, the school becomes a "venue for normative reproduction", "legally sanctioning the decisions assigned to it by the norm (the State)" (Sarmento, 1997, p477). Viewed in this way, the high levels of organisational participation mentioned by Portuguese teachers in the survey conducted by the Lisbon Municipality should be interpreted as indicating dependence and indifference rather than autonomy. Indeed, the uniformity of the results gathered from the 44 schools in the study

(implicit in the high overall rates recorded) was already an early indicator of the organisational pseudo-participation of the respondents in the survey.

The central focus of deliberation

The deliberative activity of school boards thus concerns itself, contrary to what might be inferred from an analysis of Table 13, essentially with "peripheral" pedagogic and curricular issues (parties, study visits, *story -telling).* This is the overwhelming conclusion reached from observation and from testimonies gathered in interviews. In these testimonies the teachers invariably highlighted "study visits, outings, exhibitions, problem pupils" (Margarida, associate teacher, Main School). Also mentioned, although less frequently, were matters relating to "class distribution of pupils", "book-purchases", "choice of materials",, "invitations", "municipal projects", "timetables" and "cleaning of LTA rooms". In Main school there was also a definite "bias" in favour of discussion of problems arising from relations with the community ("issues raised by parents" and problems with LTA).
This data confirms the results obtained by Sarmento (1997) in the three school analysed in the Braga district. In this study, extra-curricular activities were also identified as the main focus of school board deliberation, albeit with variable ratings in the respective schools: 91% in the Serra do Fojo school, 90% in the Civic Centre school and 58% in Aldeia do Rio (Sarmento, 1997, p475).

Functions and practices

My research also showed that the organization of these periodic joint activities, despite being a central theme at teachers' meetings, did not follow any concerted, detailed programme. There was no prior defining of aims or common themes. Thus, collective preparation amounted to no more than a verbal description and schedule of activities individually drafted by each teacher. This is why it was noted in the previous chapter that the "collective "

was perceived as nothing very different from a random collection of individual contributions, with little or no cohesion. Moreover, suffice it for one teacher to express disapproval of a joint activity under discussion for it to be abandoned forthwith, or else left to individual decision-making. For example, a proposal to celebrate Women's Day was rejected merely because one of the teachers said she "didn't agree with all this talk about women" (teachers' meeting, Main school, Sept. 99).

Collective decisions thus served, as has been stated before, to safeguard diversity rather than to promote the integration and coordination of educational practices (see also chapter 3).

Summarizing observations made of teachers' meetings, it may be stated that they played essentially:

- an *informative role* (publication of new legislation, correspondence, school and cultural events, regulations). Almost half the meetings at Main school and roughly a third at Egas Moniz school - were devoted to the imparting of information.
- a *political role*, with two different purposes (to endorse and preserve the "sacrosanct" nature of work done by teachers in their classrooms; to exert some degree of political control over the influence wielded by the head and certain senior teachers).

The teachers' meeting was rarely used, however, as a forum for the political resolution of internal conflicts. There were, basically, only three instances in which this might occur:

- the excessively biased behaviour of certain teachers who, in deciding the composition of their classes, went against the strategic interests of other senior teachers or associate teachers with several years of service in the school. One of the teachers at Park School, for example, organized her classes in such a way as not to take a single deprived pupil, while the ex-head was left with no fewer than seventeen. The ensuing argument dragged on over three teachers' meetings in succession.

- instances of apparent favouritism towards certain teachers, due to their participation in projects considered to be important (like the case of Project 3L, discussed in the previous chapter).
- reaction to the exclusion of teachers from certain public ceremonies involving dignitaries from the local or central administration (or else inclusion considered to be too low-profile).

It should also be stressed that the formal equality of power among teachers does not prevent the influence of the various groups from being highly differentiated: "there is a scale. I think that the opinion of teachers who are permanent is more valuable than that of those who aren't." (J.T Main school, see also Chapter 3).

This tension among teachers is visible in the seating arrangements during School Board meetings. At Main School, this was usually as follows :

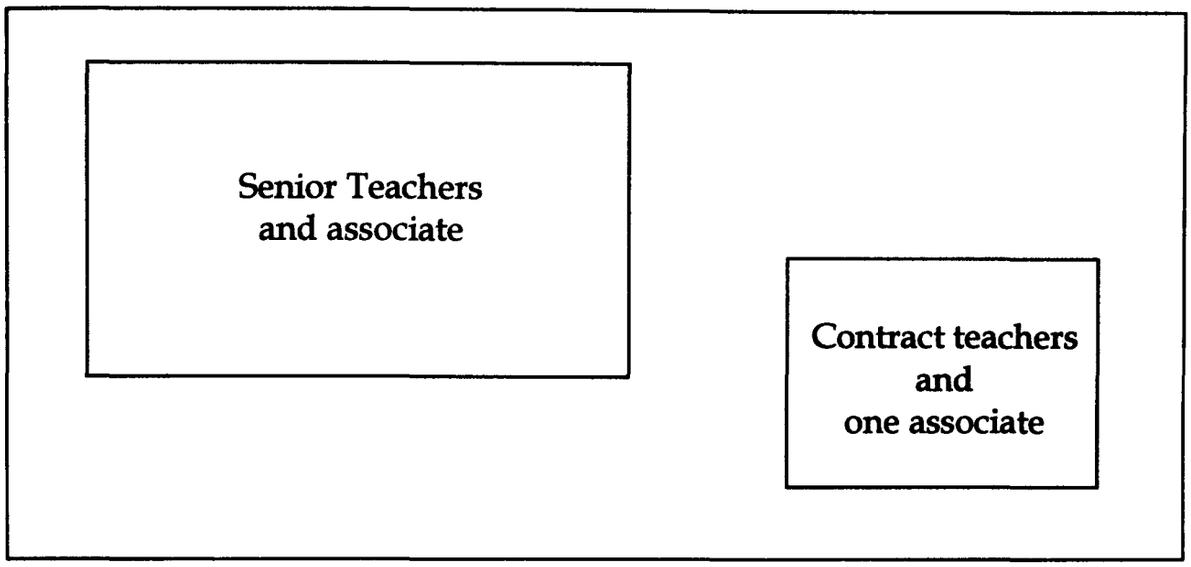
Figure 1 - School Board meetings (Main School)

Deputy Head	Headteacher		
Senior teacher (without classes)			contract teachers
Senior teachers (with classes)			contract teachers
Associate teachers	Special needs teacher	Associate teachers	Door

In addition, the contract teachers at Main school specifically mentioned in the interviews that they saved seats for each other at teachers' meetings. This proximity and unity made for greater confidence and a stronger defensive position (this group is relatively significant in number).

At Park school the age and status segregation was even more apparent. In the first year of the analysis, young and new teachers sat at a separate table during these meetings. An associate teacher, who acted as group leader, also sat there (see figure 2).

Figure 2 - School Board Meeting (Park school)



The cyclical nature of the decision making process

From observation of the procedures of school boards over a period of some eighteen months, it was also possible to record the cyclical nature of the decisions taken. The beginning of the school year was mainly taken up with tasks relating to the organisation of the school (classes, rooms, timetables, schedules of activities). The in-between periods focus on extra-curricular activities (visits, exhibitions, parties), while the ends of term are reserved for pupil assessment. At the close of the school year - the end of June - there was a return to organisational issues.

In an attempt to summarize the issues under analysis, it may be concluded that the general tenor of teachers' meetings, both from their cyclical quality and from the very nature of the debates, betrays a high degree of ritualization. While in theory the teachers' meeting should represent the fountainhead of

local educational policies and initiatives, in accordance with the political discourse subsequent to 1986, it in fact emerges as being more informative than deliberative. Although this may be in line with the scant authority it enjoys, it is no less clear that there are areas of local "joint action" which go unexploited (in the realms of pedagogy, teacher development, school and cultural events Government initiatives designed to promote whole school planning and work in schools, defined in the wake of educational reform (1986), seem to have failed dismally to arouse the enthusiasm and support of the teachers.

The new political directives contributed, however, as will now be shown, towards:

- the transformation of certain professional profiles, with particular reference to that of the head teacher;
- the emergence of new social and educational partners, who came to play an increasingly important role in the running of schools (families, companies, associations).

The Redefinition of the Role of Head Teacher

In order to analyse the process outlined above in greater depth, I shall then refer to the changes effecting the role of head teacher during the final phase of *democratic school management.*

Traditional Duties and Roles

The main duties of head teachers involved, in their own words, a lot of work and little "responsibility".

> A head teacher's job involves a lot of work with little responsibility [decision]. There's a lot to do, a lot of paper work, but it can't be said that the head teacher has a lot of freedom to make decisions. And you know why? Because the really major issues have to be referred to the regional education office. And everything one does has to be presented at teachers' meetings (Paulo, headteacher, Park school).

This lack of decision-making power did not mean lack of commitment to the running of the school, which, in all the cases observed, was carried out with the

utmost zeal and dedication. It was the head teachers who spent more hours in the school during term-time, who frequently gave up their lunchtimes to get work done, and who were present in the school during much of the "holidays". Observation would indicate that Portuguese head teachers, in spite of not enjoying the concentration of power and authority revealed in other studies, show similar "deeply-felt self-expectations" (Nias *et al*, 1989). The service ethic, an ingredient of the professional culture of Portuguese teachers, led to an unquestioning acceptance of the duties inherent in the running of a school, despite the fact that these were rewarded neither in terms of remuneration nor of career advancement (and sometimes, in fact, to their detriment). Dedication to the school was not, however, except in the case of heads who had held the office for many years, associated with the sense of "ownership" described in studies on school leadership (Nias *et al*, 1989; Southworth, 1995). There was constant reference to the teaching body and, especially, to the school board. Head teachers also displayed no visible aspirations to the educational leadership suggested by the literature on the efficacy of schools (Beare *et al*, 1997), nor to quality control of their colleagues' work:

> I don't think we have that legal power [supervision of colleagues' work]. That's the role of the Inspectorate. They're the ones with the power to intervene in the classroom (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

> At this level of education, the head can't interfere in the classroom. And if I tried, they'd immediately ask where there was anything in writing to that effect. Generally teachers are autonomous and responsible for the methods they use with their pupils. That's why I don't say anything. I just warn them, 'Be careful, because we might get an inspector round (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

The sphere of influence of the head teacher, was, in fact, very limited. Besides this, leadership required diplomacy skills and self-sacrifice in equal proportions. It boiled down, essentially, to "leading by example" (Nias *et al*, 1989): being present at all times, always arriving earlier and leaving later than other members of staff, having an "open-door" policy for colleagues, showing

zeal and competence in executing administrative tasks, gaining the confidence of superiors, promoting the good name of the school through acts of public representation (concerns shown, in particular, by the heads of Main School and Park School).

Even among established leaders, the exercise of authority over colleagues had to be handled with consummate tact; it was always indirect and based on appeals to teacher professionalism. Even blatant violations of the law - late arrival at school in the mornings, lack of playground supervision, leaving school during the break - bring only mild rebuke. No one was totally bound by the law; those who do not fulfil their obligations merely receive appeals to their better judgement.

> Everyone knows the day they are on playground duty. And I'm just mentioning this because we're all adults. I don't want to have to keep telling people. They know perfectly well when it's their day outside. It's one of the tasks we're expected to do. The teacher who doesn't go to the playground takes responsibility for her actions. Going out for coffee is the same. I don't say the teacher can't go. I just say it's their responsibility (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

Some took exception to even this form of intervention, especially at Park school, with its staff of mainly senior teachers: "tell the father that if he's got a problem, he can bring it to me" was the usual reaction to criticism.

This is why the heateacher of Park school only adopted a firm stance over particularly pressing problems, for which the head might be held jointly responsible: consistent lateness, fictitious increase of pupil numbers to keep places in the school:

> At the same time, the head can't turn a blind eye to everything, because when there's an inspection he can't pretend he didn't notice or didn't say anything. For example, in the case of keeping places free in classes, there's always someone who adds a few, and inspectors go through things like that with a fine-tooth comb. That's why the head has to draw attention to these things (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

Apart from such exceptional circumstances, the heads' duties were organised essentially around tasks of an administrative or bureaucratic nature:

> I have to deal with correspondence, statistics, accounts. The most arduous is the correspondence; there are stacks of it, which I put in bundles. And the accounts! There should be a teacher-treasurer, but no one wants the job because it takes up so much time (Paulo, Main School).

> What do they [teachers] expect of us? Work. They want us to do the paperwork, take their classes when they have a doctor's appointment, and chair the meetings. That's really all it amounts to. Because when it comes to complying with timetables and carrying out duties, they don't like it. Sometimes I go into the teachers' room and see them lounging around instead of being on playground duty. But if I say something, they get annoyed (Adélia, deputy head Main School).

> I do the school accounts, the subsidies, the milk orders, all the correspondence ... (Carlota, Avenue School)

> You ask me what I did when I was a head? Well, I managed the municipal subsidies. The local authority sent us the subsidies, and in our case there were subsidies for food for deprived pupils, for administration and cleaning, for things like stationery and software, and for didactic and pedagogic material. I also supervised the composition of classes at the beginning of the year, and kept the registers (Francisca, ex-head, Park school).

These descriptions of the role of head teacher strangely resemble those of a civil servant, whose job is mainly administrative and who has no authority to intervene in areas concerned with this specialist field: in this case, the pedagogic and educational domain. Running a school boiled down to very limited duties in the field of organisational co-ordination: convening and chairing meetings, planning and organising certain general school activities and exercising the minimum of hierarchical authority. This profile partially confirms the conclusions reached in a study made over ten years ago concerning the management of primary schools (Clímaco *et al*, 1988):

> The day-to-day running of most primary schools takes place at subsistence level. When the role of pedagogic organisation and leadership is taken away from management, all that remains as its *raison d'être* are administrative duties, while other important aspects of school organisation, like pedagogic and institutional matters, are swept under the carpet. (...) The image of the

> director as the all-powerful, centralising, inspectorial representative of the central power [during the dictatorship] has given way to the myth of collective management - pacific and without individual leaderships (Clímaco *et al*, 1988, p89).

This sense of collective leadership was so strong that even when interesting projects were produced in the school, the heads would tend to attribute them to characteristics of the teaching staff rather than take any of the credit for themselves:

> They say that the head teacher's role is very important because he should be the stimulator, the one who motivates. But this really depends on the teachers, because I think after so many years I'm still the same - your basic personality doesn't change. And this school has gone through a lot of different phases during my time as head [12 years]. The school used to do a lot of very fine work, but nowadays you can't get anything done. Even the educational project is a mere formality: it's drawn up on paper at the beginning of the year, and the content distributed among the various school years. After that there are a few teachers who do the odd bits and pieces, and that's about it. It depends a lot on the group. (Joana, head teacher of Gama School, second phase of the study)

> This school is very different from the one I'd visualised and from the one it used to be. It depends a lot on the groups. In recent years the school has almost entirely recruited teachers who are just passing through, because the school is well situated and the pupils easy to manage. And this changes the corporate dynamic of the school (Rita, head teacher, Main School).

The current research identified, however, three main differences in relation to the scenario described by Clímaco *et al* (1988):

- an increasing accumulation and diversification of the tasks in which the head teacher is involved;
- a significant development in the role of the headteacher, especially in social and institutional terms;
- a strengthening, albeit still not very appreciable, in the intervention of the head teacher in the pedagogic and organisational spheres.

These changes signal, as we shall see, the beginning of the erosion of the "myth of collective management" and certain gains in the field of "individual leadership". In summary, they represent the beginning of a transition from the phase when the head was seen as a "teacher among teachers" (see below) towards managerial forms of organisation.

The new role of head teachers

According to the study carried out by Clímaco *et al* (1988) the accumulation of administrative tasks and contact hours by head teachers did not present a serious problem: "the head teacher's job is not a very arduous one. A bit more paperwork, a bit less (...). The task of running a school is not very time-consuming. Administrative work is not very demanding (...) The workload is not excessive. I do all the paperwork"(p68).

Fifteen years down the road from this study, all the heads and ex-heads interviewed referred to the diversity and volume of work with which they were confronted daily. These tasks interfered in one way or another with their private lives and their teaching:

- by forcing them to redefine pedagogic strategies and to accumulate work to do at home ("a head is always being called out of class for one reason or another. And I can't just abandon the children. So I make worksheets, but then I have to correct them. I've got twenty pupils, so I spend at least two hours a day correcting worksheets. That's what overloads me most" (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).
- by causing greater discipline problems and lack of concentration on the part of the pupils. ("the pupils were used to me giving them a lot of attention and affection. And when I became head I could no longer give that attention. The saving grace was that they were already in the third year and very well trained." (Francisca, ex-head, Park School).
- by leaving them less time for their families ("now my husband never gets home before eight. Sometimes he stays at school until eleven or

midnight. I've been known to phone the school because I'm afraid that something has happened to him. I'm always nagging him and saying 'Go on then, carry on working like that! At the end they'll give you a medal!" (Paula, Park School teacher and Paulo´s wife).

- by creating a situation of permanent stress, especially in larger schools, due to the build-up of work pending. ("I still haven't done the accounts for the last tax year. I'm doing single-handed what in independent schools would be done by three or four people." (´Paulo, headteacher Park School).

The significant increase in management tasks between 1985 and 1999, which is the period spanning the fieldwork of the two studies, would not seem to be entirely due to changing administrative demands (although these too would seem to have increased, especially in the area of statistics). It would also be hard to explain, bearing in mind the patterns of collegiality described in the previous chapter, in terms of head teachers' greater involvement in pedagogic matters. Indeed, the evidence given by teachers and head teachers in interviews suggests, together with my observations and my analysis of the legislation, that changes in the roles of head teachers derive essentially from four important factors: greater parental involvement in schools; the increased presence of companies and services on the school premises (canteen, LTA, computer technology, language clubs); the creation of educational partnerships with the local community; and new social and institutional demands associated with the public image of the school (modernity, quality).

These recent phenomena have led in the first place to a very significant increase in the time the head teacher has to devote to direct or indirect contacts (letter, telephone) with the new social partners and services:

> The Municipality is always coming up with the Roda project (concerned with leisure-time activities). Then there's the Educational Theatre, which usually puts on a play at the end of the year. There are also the local Lisbon street parties at the end of the year and visits to Lumiar Palace. The Parish Council also phones a lot - in fact they've just phoned to see if I can find four classes to go and see a show they're putting on tomorrow. (...)

> Then there are the companies. There are lots of companies interested in the school because of where it is located. Last year Opa gave us well over £1000 worth of materials. Tulicreme also gives us things'. And there are more. The Sugar Company, Jumbo, Modelo, Pepsodent send us useful posters and materials. 'Saidos da Casca' also sends us a monthly magazine for children. There's a lot of correspondence, too: from the Municipality, for a variety of reasons, sometimes because of changes in competitive selection processes; from the Catholic University with details of training courses and enrolment dates; from theatres offering free tickets for shows (...) We also get approached personally. For example, today I've had it all, from the police to trainee teachers requesting interviews (Paulo, head teacher, Park school).

It is interesting to note that the attitude towards such requests was not generally critical. Teachers tended to be more or less happy to accept offers of school materials or presents for the children from the large companies, although these amount to forms of advertising and marketing. On the other hand, they were against the school's playing an active role in such ventures (they disagree, for example, with the affixing in the school halls of publicity, even by local traders). The frontier between school and market was thus mainly established in terms of the role - passive or active - played by the school in the process. The content and objectives of this relationship were not in themselves called into question. Some campaigns were actually refused because of the poor quality of the presents - "Last year the Christmas presents from Peninsular were a disgrace" - rather than because of the attempt to entice young consumers which these offers represent (Field notes, Christmas 2000, Main School).

Well-located schools with an upper-middle class population were the ones most competed for by the companies (publishers, language and computer schools, photographers, leisure centres) and by social and educational partners (teacher-training institutes, university researchers, art and sports centres). I could see from my work as a "shadow" at Main School that Rita was frequently required to respond to various demands for her attention at the same time. While she talked to parents and partners at pre-arranged meetings, she was constantly interrupted by phone-calls and new requests for interviews. Some of these

requests would be passed on, because of obvious time constraints, to the deputy head or even a teacher with no contact hours (Natália), who lent a hand on such occasions. These observations confirm that the opening-up of schools to the community leads to widely differentiated opportunities of access to the "social capital" existing in local communities (Lauder *et al*, 1999; Dale & Robertson, 2001). Indeed, contrary to what neo-liberal concepts would seem to suggest, access to particular organisations and networks was by no means distributed on a classless basis:

> The universality of sociability and networks obscures their differential effectiveness: lower class networks are as plentiful and varied as middle class ones, but less productive of socially and economically successful outcomes (Portes, 1998).

Schools with a less privileged population have, as principal interlocutors, public institutions and in particular the local authorities. Middle and upper-class schools have a much broader network of contacts and partners, often long established. The testimonies of local parents and guardians confirm this observation:

> The educational community here is very limited. In other areas companies and traders all take part; everyone is ready to help the school. Here it's very restricted. *The community extends to the school, the municipality, a few parents and little else* (Joana, head teacher, Gama School).

> We don't usually get many presents for the children from companies. Sometimes we go to the theatre, but the tickets are given by the parish council (...) The school isn't involved in any project this year. In fact we get little information other than what we receive from the Ministry and the Municipality (Carlota, headeacher, Avenue Schools).

Main school, on the other hand, had numerous partnerships and protocols (Rita, headteacher, Main school) with both private and public institutions outside the jurisdiction of the local and regional administration:

- teacher-training institutes ("We have a protocol with the Higher School of Education, and a lot of their students do their teaching practice with

us. We also get trainees from the Physical Education Faculty"[University of Lisbon].

- training institutes in the artistic, sporting and socio-cultural fields ("For several years we have had a protocol with the Psycho-Social School, and we also have a trainee dancer and some P.E. classes").
- psychology faculties ("The parents' association got us a protocol with Lusofona, and they're sending us someone from the psychology department. Ana Margarida, from the Faculty of Educational Psychology and Sciences has also contacted us. She's coming to live here, and would like her teaching practices to be held in the school.").
- language schools ("For several years we have had a protocol with Communicate")
- Colleges of Further Education ("They sent us somebody to organise the library")
- companies involved in catering and leisure-time activities (Gertal, Festa).

The school is also frequently petitioned for the conducting of a variety of research projects, which serve to enhance its social network. In addition it receives support - financial donations, parties and gifts for the children, provision of certain services - from various entities and private individuals (e.g. Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Gertal, A Festa, Bollicao). Some of these forms of support were of a one-off nature, while others are more regular, thus considerably increasing the school's budget and resources.

Although one cannot deny the role played by individual directors in establishing a variety of social and professional networks - Rita enjoyed excellent interpersonal relationships ranging from the local community to social partners and the central administration - the socio-economic context of the school is no less important. It is this that determines to a large extent the greater or lesser involvement of partners and companies. Indeed, every year Main school receives various proposals of "cooperation", at the instigation of the companies themselves rather than of the head teacher. Some of these proposals,

moreover, were what prompted her to start asking for "help" from the partners already established in the school:

> Certain catering companies were offering as much as two or three million Escudos to come here. That's what gave me the idea of asking for "help" from the ones already with us. I went to Rui (Gertal) and told him that improvements were needed in the canteen, and he also gives me meals for deprived children (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

The many overtures made to schools, particularly the larger ones with an upper-middle class population, all contribute to giving head teachers a social and institutional prominence unheard-of some decades ago (Clímaco & Rau, 1988). They also contribute to the spread of the idea that the separation of the roles of teacher and head teacher was practically inevitable:

> I consider that in a school like this one, with a high number of pupils and a location which makes it the target of a large number of companies, the head should be free of other duties [teaching]. She can't get a letter and just lay it aside to correct worksheets, can she? (Paula, deputy head, Park School).

> When I took the headship I said, all right, I'm going to be head, but I'm not going to give up my class. I used to love teaching. But it got very difficult and I was constantly being called out and having to interrupt my class. 'It's the Municipality on the phone, or the Parish Council, it's this, it's that, or a parent who wants to speak to you'. And I realized it was no good for me and no good for the pupils. So from that time on I stopped teaching and devoted myself to the school. And it was to my own detriment, in financial terms, because I also had to give up the private school where I was working at the time (Joana, head of Gama school, second phase of the study).

The educational reform of 1986 also helped to create a more favourable climate for the assertion of school leadership: it was based on a strong advocacy of the need for professionalization in management (Lima, 1995); it contributed to the introduction of managerial concepts and instruments which increased the scope of head teachers to intervene (educational project, plan of activities).

> I try to encourage my colleagues to help with the drafting of the school project, but end up doing it practically single-handed.

> There still isn't really a school spirit, and this is reflected in the drafting of the project. People still don't feel that the school is a place for everybody; they're still very focused on their own class and their own problems (Rita, head teacher, Main school).

> One of the things I began to do as head teacher was the educational project. I thought about the most important, most necessary areas for the school, and then I drafted the project. There was a theme of common interest, and that became the school's project. In a few years some marvellous work was produced (Joana, Gama school; second phase of the study).

> In the school I came from, it was the head who drafted and carried out the educational project. It shouldn't be like that, the project should be done by everybody. But it was very convenient (Hermínia, senior teacher, Park School).

As has already been said, teachers did not in fact show either great enthusiasm for, or great commitment to, this kind of activity:

> I'm going to be quite honest: the work I do in the classroom has very little to do with the school project. (Adriana, associate teacher, Main School).

> The projects are all either abandoned half-way through or never even get off the ground. (Joana, contract teacher, Main School).

> There's no real follow-up to projects: you hear about them at teachers' meetings, but then you never hear whether anyone took them on or not (Maria, associate school, Main School).

In spite of the limited participation by teachers, the project idea was disseminated by the central and regional administration and teacher training colleges and widely sanctioned as a sign of school modernity and efficacy (Costa, 1997). Besides this, educational projects [1] came to be used as a means of 'bartering' between schools and administration for the securing of certain 'perks': the continuation of teachers in schools (a request made annually by Main school), municipal subsidies for certain activities, reduced contact hours for teachers involved in projects.

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[1] The projects began on an extended thematic basis (e.g. The Discovery Of Lisbon [Main School]; "Protecting the Environment" [Park School]) in the early nineties, but gradually fell more in line with neo-managerial issues (see Chapter 5).

Portugal thus followed international trends in the organisational sphere, by adopting the "project" - school or company - as an attempt to mobilize local actors and modernise the education system (Costa, 1996).

The outside image of a school - with the administration, families and the professional community itself - came to depend largely on the projects and experiments with which it was connected, as well as with its promptness to participate in same. Head teachers became key figures in this process:

> This was a *pilot* school and extremely well known ... It was one of the *first* schools to apply for membership as an official Unesco school. The European Club had as many as four teachers on secondment. They were seconded for four or five years to set up the projects *The head was the great force behind the school. She was the one who brought in all the new ideas* (Aurora, deputy head, Pessoa School).

> I think what keeps this school in the forefront is the head herself. She's the one who urges us on for competitions and projects (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

> What keeps this school going is the efforts of the head, even in the community (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

While there was increased prestige in projects and the people associated with them, especially head teachers and teachers on secondment, traditional working methods began to come in for criticism (see Chapter 3). Isolation in the classroom came to be considered as a sign of obsolete professionalism: "They still work in the old Portuguese way" (Armanda, deputy head, Main school). Teachers' professional autonomy was no longer undisputed. However, head teachers continued to have extremely limited powers. When groups of teachers were unwilling to participate in projects or the new school dynamics, head teachers shunned direct confrontation. They settled for a more subtle approach:

> So that the projects don't just die, I go around asking, quite nonchalantly, "And what about the school project? What are you thinking of doing this year? (Rita, head teacher, Main School).

In fact, the ability of the head teacher to influence decisions continued to be largely dependent on the nature of the issue under discussion. It was common

practice to fall in with the head teacher over matters of an administrative nature or those that did not require the cooperation of the teachers themselves (receiving guests, responding to questionnaires). Whenever teacher cooperation was required, however - for projects, parties, competitions, exhibitions - it was a different matter.

In these cases, headteacher influence was something that had to be fought for daily, through almost exemplary conduct and great dedication to the school. And it was exhausting work:

> For things to work [projects, competitions] you have to keep on top of the teachers...and even then you don't get much participation (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

> This year I feel really tired. For at least three years I've been the lone standard-bearer for the school. I don't feel inclined to do this very much longer (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

From this we may conclude that the redefinition of the role of head teachers that took place during the final phase of the democratic management of schools, while contributing towards their greater leadership in the schools and the local community, had no significant effect on power/authority relations in Portuguese primary schools.

The current research reveals, however, that during the period under analysis heads of Portuguese schools had little in common with the myth of the "transformational" leaders that runs through contemporary organisational literature. In exceptional cases, by dint of considerable self-sacrifice and great competence, they managed to be recognized by their colleagues as "primus inter pares". In the majority of cases, however - due to legislative directives and cultural traditions quite different from those prevailing in the English-speaking countries, taken as the main points of reference in the literature - their status was close to the status of "teachers among teachers" identified by Karastanje (1999) among Spanish directors:

> In most countries school staff have civil or semi-civil servant status ... All teachers are employees of the same employer, the

> central government. This influences the position of school heads, whether their roles are that of "boss" or "teacher among teachers". The latter better describes the situation of school heads in Spain, where they are elected by fellow teachers for a period of three years, after which they return to their old teaching post (if not re-elected). It goes without saying that in this case they do not take the role of "employer" (p 38).

The situation identified in Portugal during the phase corresponding to democratic school management presents features very similar to those of Spain. However, there were also signs that a process of change was under way in teacher and headteacher work, the latter adopting a more "entrepreneurial" and neo-managerialist stance (a similar process has been identified in Spain; see Martin, 1999). In addition, some of the heads themselves were to a large extent persuaded by government perspectives on the renewal of schools and became important agents in this transformation (see also chapter 5).

Teacher "resistance", which has largely persisted in their patterns of limited collegiality, explains why this transformation has had far more of a cultural, discursive nature than a practical one. Traditional forms of teaching continued to prevail: ways of working with the children have not altered significantly. This was readily apparent from an analysis of Table 15, which is a summary of the results of a survey carried out in 44 primary schools (Borges *et al*, 1998; see The Research Process).

Table 15- Students participation in decision making

Activities	Rate of students participation in decision-making (%)
Classroom activities (suggestions)	4
Field trips (participation)	14
Parties / recreational activities	22
Disciplinary problems	29

Furthermore, unchanged practices are perfectly understandable when we consider that the political and educational directives issued during the education reform of 1986 did not include any significant investment in the area

of teacher training (pedagogy). Thus, the educational projects carried out in the schools under analysis played essentially the role of a "legitimation ritual":

> The organisational image of the educational project as a legitimation ritual presupposes, therefore, the existence of a document whose practical application fails to convince the school actors, but which sets out to satisfy the demands and expectations of the various social, political and administrative agents who expect of the school an image of quality and efficacy (Costa, 1997, p108).

Pressure brought to bear on teaching practices was, as we shall now see, more the result of influence exerted by parents in particular situations than of the new managerial tools and philosophies. It was this influence which the teachers, particularly at Main school, regarded as a threat to their professional autonomy.

Parental Involvement in Schools: a Universe of Contrasts

The formal sanction of the right of the family to participate in primary schools was, as we have already mentioned, a slow and cautious process in Portugal. Indeed, it was only in the mid-eighties that the rights of parents' associations conferred after the revolution were extended to all levels of education. These rights were increased in 1990, providing fresh opportunities for parental intervention in schools: pedagogic bodies, extra-curricular activities, school projects (Silva, 1994). In spite of these possibilities, many primary schools, especially the smaller ones or those with a lower-class population, continue today to have no parents' association. Moreover, the present study has revealed that the relationship between primary schools and families is a world full of marked contrasts: there are cases in which the families are completely marginalized, while there are others in which the power of the "consumers" is hard to ignore. Because of these contrasts, each case will be analysed separately.

The Marginalization of Parents

A case of parental marginalization, as a global institutional feature produced by the breakdown of communication between school and family, was identified in Avenida School. This school was attended entirely by deprived children from families whose way of life contrasts sharply with the traditional concepts of family. These differences were deeply felt by the school: "Many pupils are the children of prostitutes, living in rooms in boarding-houses" (Carlota, headteacher). Any relationship between the school and the community was fraught with difficulty: there were no meetings, nor was there any official or unofficial representation of parents. The latter rarely set foot in the school, even on their children's first day of classes. There was no compliance with legal provisions referring to parental participation. This total lack of communication was attributed to complete disinterest and irresponsibility on the part of the parents: "they don't come to the school, they're not interested in anything, not even in coming to get the reports" (Margarida, supply teacher at Avenue School).

Even so, certain incidents that occurred during the research - complaints by parents to the police, insults and threats outside the school - showed that in many cases parental disinterest was not as complete as teachers would like. In their own way, though the teachers might not approve, these parents were showing their awareness of the school life of their offspring. However, this did not take the form of pedagogic "supporter", as idealized by many teachers (Vincent, 1996, 2000); nor did it correspond to the teachers' idea of the family model (Davies *et al*, 1989). On the contrary, this intervention only occurred in extreme situations, with the parents defending their children in a manner which the teachers considered inappropriate and which produced fear and aversion.

Fear of family reprisals was, in fact, openly admitted in various interviews: "Nowadays I'm afraid even to raise my voice in the classroom. I'm afraid they'll tell their parents I was shouting at them" (Carlota, headteacher, Avenue School). This fear was, as far as one could see, one of the main reasons why the presence of families in the school was not encouraged. Whereas, the community showed that it was more than capable of intimidating the school, using the

apparently meagre resources at its disposal: physical aggression, insults, appeals to the police. In some cases, it even got together to use "blackmail" on the school:

> Yesterday the neighbour of the mother I told you about [the one who complained that the teacher had beaten her daughter] came to say that if this went on, she too would try to get her daughter moved to another school. She said that I could then explain to the Regional Office why so many children were leaving the school (Carlota, headteacher, Avenue School).

It was not only fear, however, that moved teachers to keep parents away from the school. Indeed, families were not considered morally fit to bring up their own children ("this is an area of prostitution and drug-addiction"), let alone to collaborate in their schooling. The effort involved in bringing the parents to the school was therefore seen as a thankless task, with undeniably disastrous consequences: "I'm against autonomy. Can you imagine parents participating in the running of a school like this? If things are this bad already, they could only become a nightmare" (Carlota, headteacher, Avenue school).

In spite of the cultural arrogance underlying the teachers' attitudes to the families of their pupils, it is hard to see them, nevertheless, as the all-powerful professionals described in some of the literature advocating choice. Indeed, these teachers were in an extremely vulnerable position. The head teacher of Avenue School and a member of the ancillary staff were physically assaulted during the course of the present study. It was not a minor assault; one of them had to go for specialist medical treatment. Besides this, both felt uncomfortable with the state of parent teacher relationships and afraid to refer it to a higher authority. They feared being misunderstood by their superiors and that the affair would end up getting into the Press. This kind of anxiety was plainly visible in the daily life of the school.

The marginalization of families therefore emerged more as a symptom of the impotence of teachers in the face of a situation with which they felt unable to cope than as an assertion of professional power and authority.

Worlds Apart: Keeping the Frontiers Alive

At Park School there is a far milder version of the separation between school and family detected at Avenue School. The teachers meet the bureaucratic demands concerning information and parental involvement, but relations are far from being close. Indeed, the whole institutional conduct of the school seemed to be geared towards preserving a respectful distance between teachers and parents:

- parents waited for their children in the school yard, and could only enter the building after making a formal request to speak to a teacher (through an errand-boy);
- parents' association representatives only attended teachers' meetings for a few minutes, because the agenda was organised in such a way as not to "force" them to stay (they only took part in discussions about parties, the canteen and LTA);
- parents were often "put in their place" ("If you were really concerned about the school, you'd bring a couple of clowns to entertain at the Christmas party. That's what parents' associations are for, not just to complain about the teachers" (Francisca, ex-head).
- the topics discussed at teachers' and parents ' meetings (compulsory) were not, as related in numerous interviews, conducive to parental involvement. They generally centred around pupil assessment or, to put it in more "modern" terms, work the pupils had done.
- even at parties, parents and teachers did not socialize. The parents congregate at the far end of the gymnasium, watching their children perform at a distance. No one establishes any kind of contact with them; it is as if they weren't there (Christmas party, field note, 1999).

When more rebellious parents appeared and tried to challenge the teacher's authority by demanding to speak to the head, they were summarily dismissed:

> Sometimes parents come and say, "I wanted to speak to you because there's a problem with my son's teacher." And I say, "I'm sorry, but you'll have to sort that out with the teacher

> because she's the one responsible for the pupils (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

Parents who tried to "ape" the behaviour of the middle class were likewise quickly made aware of their impotence. This was well illustrated by one incident during the course of the study. The parents' association tried to set up an LTA along middle-class lines (English, music and drama classes). Only eleven parents were interested and of these only six made formal enrolments. The "new" LTA closed down after Christmas for lack of support. The old one, which was much cheaper, continued to operate despite having no extra-curricular activities to offer.

These failures demonstrate that the spirit of initiative so widely preached in neo-liberal theories is rarely strong enough to circumvent the social structure: in this case the parents' initiative in attempting to secure for their children a variety of extra-curricular activities, was completely defeated by the "lack" of cultural and economic capital among the parents.

Citizens and Consumers

The democratic management of schools, in its post-revolutionary phase, has been accused of corporatism. It is alleged that, through an alliance between the State and the professionals, members of the community were effectively barred from involvement in Portuguese schools. This scenario was far from being absolute: it may be applicable to Park school, but would hardly explain the dynamic relations of Main school. Indeed, here the situation was almost diametrically opposed. Teachers' complaints were unanimous and practically endless:

> This is considered a model school, in Lisbon terms. But teachers don't want to come here, for obvious reasons: they don't want problems with the parents (Maria, associate teacher, Main School).

> Here it's the parents who have the upper hand. This is one of the schools with a reputation for very dangerous parents (Adriana, associate teacher, Main school).
>
> The teachers here get into a panic, because the parents ask too much of us in the conditions we have (Clemente, senior teacher, Main School).

These grievances are far from corresponding to any syndrome to do with the persecution of teachers. In Main School the influence of the "community" is recognized by the parents themselves, the authorities and the directors of the school:

> I have to admit that the parents' association of this school sticks its nose into everything. The parents are capable of pulling all sorts of strings, with the *CAE,* the *DREL* and the *DEB* [administrative levels], even with the Press (Ana, parents' association).
>
> Sometimes things reach us from the Ministry as *faits accomplis.* Just talk to the Regional Office - they could tell you a lot of stories like that (Carolina, *Drel).*
>
> The minister's nephew is a pupil of ours. In fact this community has everything, from ministers to secretaries of state (Rita, headteacher, Main school).
>
> At the beginning of last year, we didn't have teachers for two of the classes. So the parents went straight to the *DREL,* who of course were one the phone immediately: "Haven't you got any deputy heads there? Let them take the classes (Armanda, deputy head).
>
> I know the teachers criticize me [for listening to the parents]. But I'd rather get on with the parents than have to explain myself to Ana Benavente [Secretary of State]. I know that if things aren't solved here in the school, they'll be solved from above (Rita, head of Main School).

The parents took up all kinds of issues with the teachers and the management. Their demands began over the actual choice of school for their children:

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The parents took up all kinds of issues with the teachers and the management. Their demands began over the actual choice of school for their children:

> The parents invariably come and visit the school before enrolling their children. They want to know what it's like and

how it works: if the teachers are on the permanent staff, if they give the children continuous support, how the classes are organised. They always want to know everything about the school, including details of breaks, school dinners, etc. Today there was a woman here asking a thousand and one questions. She was very concerned to know who was going to be her child's teacher, and whether all the children who come here come from our kindergarten: "As my daughter didn't go to a kindergarten but to a private school, is there going to be a difference?" I said, "We take a lot of children who did their pre-schooling in other places, and there is absolutely no discrimination. All the children are treated equally." The woman had endless questions. She also wanted to know about the LTA - how it worked, until what time, what activities it offered, and, even inside class time, what sort of activities there were besides mathematics, Portuguese and other curricular subjects. She was a bit disappointed when I said, "Probably next year we'll have a music project, which would be very interesting." She also asked if the school offered English. I said yes, and that computers were also an extra, after half-past six." (...) Then she asked about the size of classes, if they were very big. She was very worried about whether her child would get sufficient individual attention, because she had been over-protected in her private school. I said that both our teachers and our non-teaching staff are excellent; even the children who don't have lunch in the canteen are supervised by ancillaries during the lunch-hour.

M - And was she satisfied or did she want to know anything else?

A - She wanted to see the premises and a classroom. I said the classrooms really weren't worth seeing because they were being refurbished, but she insisted and in the end we went. After seeing a classroom, she said, "Oh, that's all right - it looks like a classroom."

M - Are these sort of concerns common in this area, or was this mother an exception?

A - Very common. People come and want to know absolutely everything. They even arrange meetings and interviews to ask these kinds of question, so it didn't surprise me at all. Sometimes there's Rita (the head teacher) talking to parents on one side, me on the other and Natália (an "assistant") too. There just aren't enough of us to deal with all the requests. *Here the parents want to know the ins and outs of everything (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).*

This attitude of the critical consumer, who shops around before buying, shows that nowadays middle-class parents set about their choice of state school in much the same way as they would choose a private school. In fact many of them have, or had, their children in this sub-system. Moreover, in certain circles in Portugal, enrolling a child in the school of one's choice is the easiest thing in the world. There is always a parent, grandparent or godparent who works or resides in the area. Furthermore, the law recognizes that the guardian may not be either of the parents: the former need only be nominated by the latter. For their part the schools, appear to have no objection to receiving these privileged customers. This is why they do not question either addresses or changes of guardian.

The importance given to school choice represents, however, only a part of a deeper change in parenthood. The interview extract included above is particularly illustrative of the present-day tendency to construct an extremely elaborate concept of maternity and paternity:

> Parental responsibilities multiply as parenting and family life become an "educational project", something that has to be worked at rather than simply lived, something which can always be improved (...). The imperative is to identify and meet a whole range of potential needs and desires on the part of developing children (Vincent, 2000, p23).

This explains why certain parents' demands and expectations of the school were virtually limitless. And this level of expectation has obvious repercussions in the pressures to which teachers and the children themselves were subjected. Indeed, even the pupils lived a life of perpetual stress: besides the many activities open to them through the LTA run by the parents' association - swimming, music, judo, dance, drama - they also had activities in the evenings - piano, fencing, violin...

We are therefore in the presence of "an increased commodification of childhood, as consumer goods and services for children diversify and proliferate" (Vincent, 2000 p23).Teachers try to prevail upon parents, but with little success:

> I always say to them, 'Don't enrol your children in so many activities. Let them play a bit; they spend long enough at school as it is. But they want them to be little graduates in primary school (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

The existence of an LTA with a wide variety of activities thus constitutes one of the main reasons for choosing the school:

> The parents want lots of activities. For them this school is like a private school. And better than a private school, because it's a state school with almost the same number of activities on offer (Rita, Main School).

It is the parents who run the LTA and the canteen, and who maintain contacts with the Language Institute. They are therefore in charge of the whole process of (belated) modernization of Portuguese primary education. They also deal, through outside contracts, with many of the social services of the school: lunches, supervision of the children and indirect social support (for example study visits). In a word, they in effect take upon themselves many of the duties incumbent on the State in the field of basic education. This community service undertaken by the parents has some quite obviously adverse consequences:

- it reduces pressure on the State to modernise curricula and create new infrastructures in primary education (pressure which middle-class parents could otherwise exert). Indeed, this level of education continues to concern itself only with providing an educational service, rather as happened during the dictatorship, when social matters were relegated to charitable institutions. A meal in a primary school canteen now costs far more than at any other educational level. The responsibilities undertaken by middle-class parents in dealing with their children's problems make it easy for the State to renounce the social obligations which it should assume at this critical level of education to ensure equality of educational opportunity;
- it puts school equipment, head teachers and even ancillary staff at the service of interests which are clearly private and have nothing to do with many of the pupils.

> The co-ordination of the various outside services creates an awful lot of work, and causes a lot of complaints. And probably

> the staff lack the necessary commitment and sense of responsibility. When I ask someone to take responsibility for something, they pass the buck to someone else. And then the teachers come and complain that the room hasn't been cleaned, the board hasn't been cleaned, the cupboard has been opened and something or other removed. And if we take the matter up with those responsible, they say, "I'll do something about it, I'll give instructions, I'll take steps", but things improve for a day or so and then we're back to square one (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

> With so many people coming to the school, we spend the whole day running around [opening and closing the gate]. And then the problem is that there are children here from half-past seven in the morning until the time we leave. As you can see, today we're on holiday, but there are children here. We never get any peace (Isaura, staff representative, Main School).

It is true that the school gets a certain spin-off from these activities: some of the poorer children are allowed free meals and to attend certain courses. But only a few benefit from these grants. On the other hand, the activities held at the school only cost parents about half the going rate (for example, the price of English classes). However, the most negative impact of this process is of an ideological nature. By taking responsibility off the shoulders of the State and putting it into the hands of local agents, it gives credence to the idea that all the problems of the education system could be resolved if there were the proper local initiatives. This image is extremely simplistic and, despite its apparent modernity, thoroughly conservative. Indeed, as was shown by the attempt to set up the "Brinca" LTA at Park school, certain proposals only succeed in schools with a sufficient ratio of middle-class parents who can afford to pay. Although such LTA's are offered at less than the market rate, they still cost at least 15.000$00 per child. If a family has two children, it will pay half the national minimum wage for them to join. This is absolutely inadmissible, considering the cost of housing and staple commodities in Portugal, in that it can only benefit a small minority of Portuguese families. It also creates two classes of basic education within the state system, depending on whether the schools offer extra-curricular activities or not. It should however be stressed

that the importance attached by parents to LTA's does not constitute their major concern, which lies rather, as certain authors have pointed out (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995), in the academic field:

> The parents want everything. They want community relations, they want projects, they want extra activities, they want music and everything. *But they're specially concerned with the [academic] teaching* (...) Provided the teacher, even if he isn't involved in big projects or other "showy" things, more or less follows the old-style Portuguese education system, the parents are delighted. What they want is for their children to *work, work, work* (Armanda, deputy head, Main School, my emphasis).

On the other hand, almost all the teachers who favoured methods considered innovative, found they had problems with parents. These problems could drag on for years, even when the teachers concerned had an excellent reputation in the professional and academic community (for example, teachers collaborating with teacher training colleges or on ministry projects):

> When I came here, I had lots of problems with the parents. I had a different approach to teaching, and was always averse to textbooks. I began in the way I was used to, and the parents were up in arms. I had to have endless meetings with them - we once spent a whole Saturday in the school, just discussing my way of working with the children (Maria, associate teacher, Main School).

Three years later, the parents were still "provoking" her and pressuring her to go more quickly and be more academically demanding. For example, at a meeting held *in October*, at which Maria explained that she had been revising basic material from the previous year, one mother immediately retorted with some hostility, "So that's what the third year is going to be - revision of the second?" (Fieldnote, October 2000).

Other teachers had similar experiences:

> When I took over the class, I could immediately sense the parents' anxiety to know how I was going to teach such-and-such an item, and what were my aims. I explained that, as far as my method was concerned, I very much favoured working as a group and that in general I would go from the pupils to the material rather than vice-versa. It was very difficult; they weren't used to this and questioned everything I did. One day a

> mother came to me and said, "Can't they do subtraction yet?" And I said, "But you know there's more on the syllabus than subtraction." And I don't think they're mature enough to learn to subtract by borrowing. But I didn't give up, and was always trying to explain my method at parents' meetings. I give them the term plan, which includes drama and art, so that they can see and follow everything. If I'd given in, my classes would be totally perceptive.
> M - Was there a lot of pressure?
> S - A huge amount. And the teacher must always have the courage of her convictions. I know the school, and insecurity is fatal. For example, the first year I was here there was a teacher who was constantly being accosted by parents. And this year there was another who had to leave. Her insecurity showed, and the parents took such advantage of this that she had to leave. She tried to talk them round, but they didn't want to know. That's why I say insecurity is fatal. (Sara, Main School)

When pressure on teachers is not enough, parents resort to the school management:

> The parents here are always complaining. They complain because one teacher misses classes, because another's always late, because another is not sticking to the syllabus, because their child's teacher is going slower than the other teachers ... The parents get together and compare [the teachers](...) and they want to see and to know everything: the syllabuses, the teaching-plans. And even when they don't speak to the teachers, they come and have a go at us. They even want the teachers to teach things that aren't on the syllabus. And we try to calm them down (Adélia, deputy head, Main School).

It was therefore easy to see why the management of the school made a point of being in the school in the morning when the parents came to leave their children. This was the time when some of the problems could be circumvented. Rita (head of Main school) was always surrounded, first thing in the morning, by a group of mothers that would take about an hour to break up. This mediation on Rita's part often prevented problems from getting out of hand. Even so, there was a general feeling in this school that "parents had too much say". It was obvious, moreover, that Rita was held in great esteem by the community in which she worked. The parents' association also admitted that it was easier to solve problems with Rita than with most of the teachers:

> Sometimes there are things we arrange with Rita for which she is then unable to get the approval of the other teachers (Jorge, member of parents' association).

The current research shows, therefore, that while social class determines relations between the school and the family, the head teacher also plays an important role as mediator (see also Power *et al*, 1997). This will, however, be explored in greater depth in the phase two of the study.

The analysis conducted throughout this chapter, concerning the issues of leadership and participation, has led us to identify the convergence in Portuguese primary schools of three main managerial trends: educational centralization, pressures for self-management and a "toned down" form of neo-managerialism.

Centralization meant essentially that the curricular, pedagogic and financial aspects of school activity were highly regulated. This mass production of rules and regulations did not, however, result in as rigid a control over practices as one might be led to expect. In fact, the apathy of teachers towards administrative issues was one of the reasons for their scanty awareness of the prevailing norms and legislation. Accordingly, non-observation of the rules was common, and even applied to major aspects of the pedagogic and curricular management of the schools. Many of the legislative infringements recorded in this field were related to non-assimilation of the new model for pupil evaluation (designed to adapt the curriculum and strategies to the needs of the pupils, thus cutting down the school failure rate) and to the prevalence of traditional styles of professional socialization (which led teachers to favour textbooks and worksheets at the expense of contents and programmatic guidelines).

In the organisational sphere, "resistance" to directives from the central administration was mainly in the form of paying only lip-service to the legislation. Open violation of the law was, meanwhile, avoided. Plans and projects were therefore drawn up but only superficially executed. This way of

circumventing government directives was facilitated by the fact that there was no efficient control mechanism to back up the normative hyperactivity of the administration. The sheer unwieldiness of the system, plus the anti-authoritarianism in the schools combined, in fact, to create an atmosphere which was hardly conducive to external control (exams, inspection, assessment of teacher performance).

Portuguese teachers thus enjoyed, in spite of formal centralization, a not inconsiderable degree of autonomy. This autonomy, which was produced by a marked segmentation of educational activity, included major aspects related to curriculum, assessment and pedagogy (see also Chapter 3).

It should be stressed that the freedom enjoyed by the teachers was not only brought about by the weakened political influence of the central administration associated with the end of the dictatorship. It also reflected a perpetuation of certain self-management orientations resulting from the April Revolution: emphasis on the teachers as a group (political and symbolic); narrowing of the gap between directors and directed; restriction of the organisational participation of non-professional educators (parents, members of the community). However, during the period under analysis, in contrast to the revolutionary period, the observed trends towards self-management were more of an individual than a collective cast. They centred almost exclusively on a mechanical defence of professional autonomy and appeared to entertain no ideas of emancipation or social transformation. This is why the second phase of the democratic management of schools, subsequent to the revolutionary experiment, has been classified as corporate (Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994).

The tension between the centralist pressure of the central administration and the autonomous orientation of the teachers was eased by a certain tacit convergence of interests regarding the "outlawing" of some educational actors: parents, local authorities, (see also Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994, Barroso, 1999). This "alliance" between the central administration and the teachers, closely bound up with the nature and degree of the country's economic development, helped to slow down the penetration of new managerial concepts of a neo-

liberal and neo-managerial stamp. Thus directors of Portuguese schools, unlike their counterparts in other countries, had a very fragile status among their colleagues.

The influence of the majority of "consumers" was also very limited and, moreover, circumscribed by rigid patterns of social stratification. With the exception of the upper middle class, parents had virtually no say in the running of the schools: they were in evidence mainly at compulsory meetings, which frequently consisted of no more than the *individual* notification of pupils' results. Even social events were not always open to families (Christmas parties, end-of-year ceremonies).

In upper middle class schools the situation was practically reversed. Here the parents wielded a degree of pressure very similar to that observed in contexts where the power of the consumer was the bedrock of educational restructuring. Thus, upper middle class families acted as skilled choosers in their children's education, using various tactics to turn to advantage the respective legislation, including resorting, when necessary, to the giving of false addresses.

The intense interference of these "clients" was not limited to the choice of school. After securing a place in the school of their choice, they would continue to follow their child's progress with great interest. In spite of limited legal backing, they were fully prepared to question the priorities and methods of the teachers. Nor were they put off by obstacles of an administrative nature. They attempted to bend the rules, often with remarkable success: transfer of pupils to other classes, speedy replacement of teachers who were absent, "control" of teachers' work. Although parents showed interest in a number of different issues, they were particularly concerned with the academic component of the curriculum. It was in this area, similar to tendencies noted in other countries (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995), that parental pressure was most heavily brought to bear. Parents were not blind, however, to the multifaceted needs of the "new economy": information technology, languages, arts, personal image Accordingly, upper middle class schools offered, at the instigation of parent associations, a wide variety of extra-curricular activities (music, dance, English,

computers, judo). Such local initiatives were, moreover, strongly encouraged by the State: the social and cultural functions of the school, "modernization" of the system, support systems (cafeteria, bar, security) were in fact areas in which private initiative and patronage were not only permitted but actively encouraged.

Centralising and autonomous orientations were therefore not the only ones to be identified in Portuguese primary schools. There was also evidence of the new neo-liberal and neo-managerial concepts, in various aspects of school activity: cultural, organisational and social.

On the cultural level, as has already been mentioned, there was some assimilation of the ideals of the new professionalism (see also Chapter 3). This assimilation was most noticeable among teachers with responsibilities for coordination and school management and, in practical terms, in middle-class schools (projects, educational partnerships, "customer" service).

In the organisational sphere, particular stress should be given to the redefinition of the director's role, which came to include greater diversification and political importance. This redefinition was the result of the convergence, beginning in the late eighties, of a number of factors:

- the delegation, by the central administration, of fresh managerial responsibilities to primary schools (project design, plan of activities, regulations);
- the creation of logistic, recreational and cultural support infra-structures in certain schools.

On the social level, reference should be made to the increasing pressure and influence of middle-class families (already mentioned). This pressure has further helped to increase the social and political responsibilities of the school director (receiving parents and mediating conflicts). Middle-class schools have also become an important advertising and commercial target for various companies, which obliges school directors to interact frequently with these new partners.

It can therefore be stated that, during the period under analysis, there was already considerable differentiation between Portuguese state schools. Middle-class schools had a "modern" nucleus of education at their disposal, consisting of certain curricular activities (projects, the support of specialist teachers) and a comprehensive extra-curricular programme (languages, arts, sports). Besides this, they enjoyed better logistic and social infrastructures (canteen, supervision of pupils outside class-time, security).

Schools with mainly under-privileged pupils, and which did not have the support of parent associations or local patrons, could only in exceptional cases diversify their educational offer and provide additional school services such as canteens, supervision and leisure-time activities. They therefore attracted an ever smaller and more socially deprived population.

This study therefore confirms fears that appeals by schools and communities to "free initiative" may lead to (increased) social inequality. It also shows that the cultural and social capital of certain families enables them to circumvent even the administrative, institutional and professional barriers inherent in a strongly centralized educational system. The "deregulation" of the system, as we shall see in Part III of this dissertation, will facilitate the process of "privatization" of Portuguese primary schools attended by middle and upper class pupils. However, as has just been shown, various aspects of this process were already in evidence in the final years of the democratic management of schools (especially "choice" and a certain curricular differentiation).

PART III

SCHOOL AUTONOMY: THE EARLY YEARS

CHAPTER FIVE
NEW PATTERNS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The institutionalisation of SBM models presupposes a thorough reform in the regulating of schools and in the nature of the relations between the various local actors (Clark & Newman, 1997; Menter *et al*, 1997; Raab & Arnot, 2000; Troman, 2000; Gewirtz *et al*, 2002). This chapter will therefore be dedicated entirely to an analysis of these transformations and I shall begin by referring to certain aspects regarding the change in patterns of educational regulation in contemporary societies (Section 1). I shall then summarize the principal changes in this field in Portuguese primary education as a result of the implementation of SBM. Particular emphasis will be given to the new role of the central administration (Section 2), of school managers (Sections 3 & 4) and of the community in school management (Section 5).
Finally, by way of a conclusion, I shall give a detailed description of the new network of relations of power and influence underpinning the day-to-day running of Portuguese primary schools.

SBM: a Shift From State Control to the Governance of Education?

The political significance of the reform in school governance has given rise to different interpretations related to the issue of concentration and dispersal of power in contemporary societies. SBM advocates emphasise the world-wide retreat from centralised, bureaucratised educational systems and celebrate the possibilities of choice, empowerment and diversity that they regard as part of the process (Chubb & Moe, 1992; Tooley, 1996; Caldwell & Spinks, 1998). However, several authors, standing outside the idealization of the new structures, prefer to speak of the changing modes of regulation of public education (Menter *et al*, 1997; Ball, 2001/2002; Apple *et al*, 2002; Lima, 2002). It is

these latter perspectives which, since the principles of SBM have already been described, will constitute the main focus of the present reflection.

New Models of Educational Regulation

The idea that the institutionalisation of SBM cannot be regarded exclusively as a process of educational decentralisation derives, in the first place, from the way the model has been conceptualised, i.e. the idea that the central administration should retain its monopoly over the definition and evaluation of the basic objectives of the system (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992,1998).

To argue that the implementation of SBM models cannot be understood simply as a process of educational decentralisation clearly does not imply that the State continues to regulate education along traditional lines. Indeed, several authors have pointed to the transition from a model of direct regulation on the part of the State to another, based on different types of association between government, para-government and non-government organisations (Sarmento *et al* 1999; Arnott & Raab, 2000). It would be misguided, however, to assume that this change necessarily leads to a process of political democratisation.

This problem had in fact already been highlighted by Gramsci, in his studies of the nature of the State in western societies (Gramsci, 1971). Indeed, this author was one of the first to consider that the "state" could not be understood without reference to civil society (i.e. to those "private" organisations which belong neither to the production sphere nor to the administrative, political and legal structures through which "state" control is exercised). Civil society, in Gramsci's view, would play a vital role in the dissemination of concepts and practices congruent with the strategic interests of the dominant social groups. Although various notions of civil society had previously been put forward, the Gramscian perspective is still of help in clarifying why:

- SBM has been accused of further disadvantaging those already disadvantaged (Derouet, 2000; Whitty, 2002).

- the opening-up of schools to civil society has been characterized by an increasing formalization and contracting of relations between social partners (Stoer & Rodrigues, 1998).

The contract (which in Portugal takes the form of the "protocol") defines the duties, aims and responsibilities of each of the institutional "partners" and, increasingly, procedures for evaluating results (which is precisely what happens with the contracting of autonomy in Portuguese schools). Although the delegating of responsibilities (or the contracted service) may be of little importance, the introduction of the contract in itself paves the way for change in social relations by reinforcing entrepreneurial identity and the principle of performativity. The signing of contracts in areas outside traditional economic activity - education, politics, culture - also represents a significant enlargement of the territory economic theory (Smyth, 1999; Kenway *et al*, 2000). It constitutes, in this sense, more a sign of expansion in the economic sphere than of development in the domain of citizenship.

Indeed the new managerial perspectives do not limit themselves to valorizing "civil society" and citizenship. They also modify the meaning traditionally attached to these concepts.

> As the new education policies foster the idea that responsibility, beyond the minimum required for public safety, is to be defined entirely as a matter for individuals and families, then not only is the scope of the state narrowed, but civil society will progressively be defined solely in market terms. As education appears to be devolved from the state to an increasingly marketised civil society, consumer rights will prevail over citizen rights. This will reduce the opportunities for democratic debate and collective action (Whitty, 2002, p87).

Internalising Neo-Managerialism

Changes in the way education is regulated in contemporary societies are not, however, limited to the redefinition of boundaries between the central administration and "civil society". School organisations will also be the object of thoroughgoing internal institutional redefinition. Power (1997) clearly expresses

this idea when she says that at the heart of reformist programmes "there is a commitment to push control further into organisational structures, inscribing it within systems which can then be audited. In this respect *governance*[1] is not to do with policing or surveillance in the normal sense of external observation, although elements of this may exist; "it has more to do with attempts to re-order the collective and individual selves that make up organisational lives (Power *et al*, 1997, p42, my emphasis).

This movement implies an important change in the way individuals themselves are defined. Social actors are no longer considered to be the repository of a particular set of competences, skills and knowledge, and come to be essentially characterized by their pragmatic capabilities and dispositions (Popkewitz, 1999). In this sense they become "empty selves", endowed with a merely temporary and contingent subjectivity that is liable to be redefined and restructured with each new contract. It is in this context that we can understand the overriding importance attributed by SBM supporters to the cultural leadership of organisations. Institutional cultures and visions articulated by 'leaders' provide the substance of commitment, purpose and group allegiance. School actors need to be encouraged to organise and plan their whole lives in accordance with the rules of economic calculation and "enterprise culture", focused on the survival of the organisation.

The institutionalisation of forms of "enterprise government" has important consequences on the social level. In the first place, it gives ontological priority to a particular category of person: the business person or entrepreneur (Peters & Waterman, 1995; Dunford *et al*, 2000). At the same time certain social functions - administration, consumption, evaluation - are emphasised, while traditional functions are subject to modification and capture (especially production).

> First, there is a clear division or gap developing between school managers, oriented primarily to matters of financial planning,

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[1] "Governance - that is, the control of an activity by some means such that a range of desired outcomes is attained - is, however, not just the province of the state. Rather, it is a function that can be performed by a wide variety of public and private, state and non-state, national and international, institutions and practices" (Hirst and Thompson, 1995, p422, quoted in Dale, 1997, p275).

> income generation and marketing, and classroom practitioners (...) Within this gap, this division of purposes and interest, there is considerable potential for tension and conflict, particularly in direct confrontation between financial planning and educational judgement about good practice (...) In these situations the "steering at a distance" aspects of the reform and the role of management in the delivery of performativity are clear within the microphysics of the institution. The manager, in effect, stands for and does the work of the state in imposing financial limits and disciplines on the practice of colleagues (Ball, 1994, pp73-75).

Executives, legitimised by "transformational leadership", constitute the prototype of the "new man" generated by the entrepreneurial culture (see Chapter 4). However, "entrepreneurial governance" is not restricted to a specific social category. Some studies reveal the emergence of a new professional who shows considerable sympathy with and consummate skill in the face of the new labour conditions with which they find themselves confronted (Pollard *et al*, 1994; Woods & Jeffrey *et al*, 1997).

It should, however, be stressed that "freedom to manage" would seem to be far more limited than neo-managerial concepts would have us believe. In the first place, the new managerial concepts are being implemented in a context of steady expansion of the "audit state". In this sense, the increased load of documentation required by SBM does not serve only to control the teaching staff: even school executives are "examined" and subjected to "hierarchical observation". In Portugal, for example, the transition to "autonomy" was accompanied by an annual school inspection focusing on administrative aspects (together with an increase in mechanisms for assessing school results). The margin of autonomy enjoyed by school managers is further affected by the profusion of models of "professional parenting", which directly or indirectly influence the running of the schools (see Chapters 4 & 6).

Secondly, despite being the key actors in their schools, school managers are in fact at the middle management of bureaucracy: they are neither liberal professionals nor part of the "technostructure" that defines the objectives and methods of "surveillance" of the educational process. Of particular relevance in

this situation are the warnings of those authors who remind us of the limits of neo-managerialism and "transformational leadership" for the new school executives: "school principals are being produced as on-line managers providing efficiency, accountability and compliance, but their hands are tied in their endeavour (Meadmore *et al*, 1995, p409; see also Power *et al*, 1997).

Finally, it should be noted that the new educational policies rarely imply an immediate and radical break with the old forms of coordination and power (central administration, professional expertise, bureaucratic organisation). Further, there are differences of temporality, configuration and intensity in the way in which they penetrate the various contexts and organisations. This is why various authors refer to the non-linear nature of the processes of convergence seen in the domain of school administration (Green, 1999; Derouet, 2002) and the existence of a dialectic of continuity and change in current educational reforms (Afonso, 1999; Whitty, 2002; Dias, 2002). This dialectic is reinforced by the *"conservative modernisation"* that prevails in the definition of policies (Dale, 1990). These perspectives, as we shall now see, are particularly helpful in illuminating the way in which the new management model was implemented in Portugal (see also Chapter 6).

Organisational Redefinition, Pragmatism and Political Re-Centralization.

Educational reforms carried out in Portugal, even during the period prior to the implementation of democracy, generally complied with the assumptions of an "educating state" that is also an "enlightened reformer" (CAA, 1997). This orientation was only relaxed after the LBSE (1986), with the introduction of forms of public debate of documents and the sanctioning of the national education council (which includes representatives of virtually all sectors of "civil society"). However, "enlightened" strategies for change continued to dominate. It is therefore not surprising that the actual sanctioning of school

autonomy should have been a government initiative (Afonso, 1999), and that the central administration should have played a major role in the management of change: scheduling of the process and definition of criteria for the immediate putting into effect of change (educational level, size of schools); drafting of models for the production of norms (regulations, project guidelines, etc.); regulation of working conditions for those in positions of responsibility (salary increments, release from teaching duties).

Schools, despite being elevated to the category of "centres for the defining of educational policies" continued to be relegated to the subordinate position of those who execute directives rather than define policies. Furthermore, they were obliged to carry out a significant organisational restructuring to an extremely tight deadline[2]: organisation of school consortia, constitution of provisional commissions and election of new management bodies, drafting of the documents required by law, training for the new school functions. This reforming frenzy turned the transitional phase into a period of marked re-centralization: it curbed the freedom enjoyed by local actors in their internal relations and it gave rise to a heavy demand for institutional support from the central services [3].

In the hurly-burly of change, teachers (and even directors) were left unaware of central aspects of the new system of administration. The issue of autonomy contracts, in particular, largely went by the board:

> Interviewer: And what about the autonomy contracts?
> Graça: The autonomy contracts? What autonomy contracts?
> Interviewer: You've never heard of them?
> Graça: Not that I recall. But what contracts? The only contract we've made is for swimming in the Areeiro swimming-pool. (Graça, president, executive Board, Gama School)

> Interviewer: You mean that the autonomy process is complete?
> Adriana: Well, isn't it?

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[2] within the space of approximately one year

[3] Certain more innovative ventures, like the Raag-Forum (an Internet debating site) ended up being taken over by the re-centralizing camp, who used it as a way to spread the official word on the new management regime, and even as a vehicle for ideas and orientations not even alluded to in the models (global report, p33).

> Interviewer: I'm just the interviewer, so my opinion doesn't count! (laughter). But what do you feel?
> Adriana: It seems to me that everything's been done. The office is up and running, and we've got a board of directors, a School Assembly and a Board of Studies. I don't think there's anything left to do - nothing at all. But for you to be asking me, it's probably because there is! (Adriana, associate teacher, Main school).

I suggest then, that the early years of SBM (1998-2002) correspond, in a variety of domains, to a clear re-centralization of the system resulting from the combination of three essential factors: the tight deadlines of the transitional phase; the hyper-regulating tendency which was a feature of the process (this regulating pressure affected even minor organisational aspects like the allocation of time available for administrative duties); and the "overlooking" (postponement) of autonomy contracts, a key channel through which the new responsibilities would be transferred to the schools. In this sense, the implementation of SBM seems to have done more to increase the "rationality" of the prevailing bureaucratic model in Portugal than to disseminate alternative models. Indeed, Portuguese bureaucracy has been considered a partial bureaucracy, "that is, an organisational model which would strengthen centralized bureaucratic control and tend to discount other dimensions more related with rationalization" (Lima, 1998, p157). This is evident in the twin-faceted operation of Portuguese schools, simultaneously characterised by the bureaucratic order of connection and the anarchic order of disconnection (Lima, 1998). The institutionalisation of SBM, by imposing a more detailed specification of the organisational dynamics of schools (rules and regulations, projects and plans of activities) together with a strengthening and diversification of control structures (evaluation of results, annual inspections of schools operating autonomously) promotes greater rationality and predictability of the system.

The success of the implementation of the new management model, as can be seen from the number of consortia set up or from the sanctioning of new management bodies, has thus been considered more administrative than

political (see also Barroso, 2001). Even in areas where school autonomy was apparent, compliance with national directives prevailed. In fact, "school projects" and "school regulations" ended up reiterating national directives in a variety of ways: institutional objectives were withdrawn from the Basic Law of Education, curricular aims from the national programmes, school rules from official documents[4]. Even the actual diagnostic analysis of the schools, which should be central to the affirmation of their institutional specificity, reproduces[5] the key elements of the prevailing management discourse: importance of team work (Main School) and students' basic and social skills [6] (social skills were the project focus of Pessoa and Magalhães Schools, as they had also been, in the previous phase, of Main School). In effect, the thematic similarity between the projects of the different schools under analysis shows that the implementation of SBM is failing to produce real initiative and local policy-making.

These considerations should not, however, lead us to the conclusion that the implementation of the new management regime has generated nothing but processes of re-centralization. Approximation to neo-managerial paradigms were evident in a different aspects: changes in the type of relations between the central office and the schools; the gradual institutionalisation of the mechanics of "steering at a distance"; incentives for the "re-culturation" and reorganisation of schools; new power relations in primary education. Indeed, observation of the process of reform in the four schools comprising the sample reveals that, despite regulating pressure, there has been a degree of change in the attitude of the administration towards the schools. This change was evident in the discharge of new duties - counselling, legal consultancy, incentives to action, training, a certain receptiveness in the constitution of groupings - which all add up to the outline of a model closer to forms of incentive, guidance and consultancy than to the purely bureaucratic model. This transformation is not

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[4] memo, field notes, Main school, 1999 & 2000 and Pessoa School 2000

[5] With the exception of Gama School, which was, curiously, the least in favour of the autonomy process

[6] The curricular reorganization of 2000/2001 in fact made this issue obligatory, which is why the schools under analysis simply brought this measure forward by a year (it was already being hotly debated at the level of official structures)

solely limited to the schools under analysis, since the evaluation commission also stresses that "most of those interviewed are conscious of a supportive and flexible attitude" on the part of the de-centralized central administration (Barroso, 2001, Report 5, p6). And indeed, the change in attitude on the part of the administration must be considered highly significant. Indeed, the traditional orientation of hierarchical control and norm production, which persisted in spite of the "glasnost" since the 1986 educational reform, has been considered one of the major obstacles to a public policy of devolution of power in Portugal (Afonso, 1999).

The "conservative modernization" of Portuguese educational administration can also be seen in the increasingly frequent use of mechanisms related to "steering at a distance": internal and external evaluation, indirect managerial instruments (projects, plans of activities); institutionalisation of a variety of forms of contrived collegiality (school management, curricular management, pedagogic management).

Of particular relevance here is the development of a variety of mechanisms for the evaluation of performance; the evaluation of the quality of schools, and the periodic preparation of internal assessment reports. This is important, firstly because it confirms the trend towards the "audit state" already in place in other countries (see Chapter 1), and secondly, because the abolition of external evaluation was one of the few "April victories" which survived the educational and political normalisation that came in the wake of the Revolution. This abolition represented an extremely important part of the autonomy won by Portuguese teachers in the final quarter of the twentieth century; and, paradoxically, the increase in "school autonomy" in the most recent reforms has led to a reduction in "teacher autonomy".

Finally, as discussed above, the (soft) change in attitude of the Portuguese administration towards the schools was accompanied by an increase in mechanisms of internal control. The role of school executives and that of middle-class parents has, as we shall now see, played a vital role in this process.

New "Headship": the Difficulties of Changing the Paradigm

The power to be granted to school executives is one of the distinctive features of neo-managerial institutional reform (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Clark & Newman, 1992; Arnott & Raab, 2000). In Portugal, in contrast, the democratic experience combined with the centralist tradition had turned school heads into "teachers among teachers". However, in the nineties, there was a distinct trend towards increasing divergence in values, status and duties between teachers and school managers (see Chapter 4). Indeed, the latter seemed able to accommodate themselves to successive mandates, most recently, by turning themselves into a breed of professional managers. This phenomenon is readily apparent in the process of the institutionalisation of SBM:

> With regard to the members of the executive council, one can detect a definite thread of continuity in relation to the management bodies in office before the beginning of the implementation of the new system of administration and management. Thus, in about two-thirds of the cases examined, the president of the executive steering committee had previously carried out management duties at a similar level (Barroso, 2001, Report nº 4, p2).

The support given by a very considerable number of "school managers" to the new management model was not limited to their avowed readiness to continue in their position. In the schools under analysis, for example, the influence of former heads was decisive in generating a prompt acceptance of the transition to the new management model:

> In April I was at a meeting with the regional director, and he said they were ready to go ahead with the process in schools with over 300 pupils. I had to raise the issue at a teachers' meeting. *To begin with the teachers wanted nothing to do with it, because the school had been against the new model. But I made them see* that going against the Ministry wouldn't get us anywhere. We'd get a bad name and only succeed in delaying the process for a year (Rita, head teacher, Main school, my emphasis).

> *Here people were in favour of school autonomy more because they were carried along by the head than through personal conviction.* It was the head who espoused the new model, and the rest of us followed suit. In a set-up like ours, a persuasive, convincing

> head could talk a lot of people round. Especially on administrative matters, which were not of much interest to the teachers anyway. People would say, "OK, if that's the way you think, it's fine by me". That's what happened over the question of autonomy (Maria, permanent teacher, Sta. Maria Consortium Main school, my emphasis).

The collaboration of school directors with the central services, during the process of implementation of SBM, was further evident in the role they played in the drawing-up of lists of candidates for the new management structures. Faced with the apathy of their colleagues, who were reluctant to take on administrative duties, former heads and presidents of steering committees exerted a decisive influence on the formation of the new management bodies:

> I only agreed to be president of the school assembly because I was a friend of Rita's. I don't really like this type of work. As you may have noticed, I'm a bit shy. In group situations I often remain silent; I get a bit tongue-tied (Amália, president of the school assembly, Main school).

> I had to call a meeting to organise the lists. Nobody wanted to apply. I had to lose my temper with them (Rita, Main School).

The evaluation committee report reveals that this kind of "persuasion" took place nationwide: "Many of the panel members stated that they had agreed to be on the lists of candidates, without knowing what they were going to do, more because of external pressure or support of promoters and colleagues than because of personal conviction or interest" (Barroso, 2001, Report nº 7, p11).

The apathy of the new school representatives towards organisational issues, associated with ignorance regarding the duties and *modus operandi* of the various bodies, did a great deal to increase the sphere of influence of the school executives.

> People are always asking me who's responsible for this, that or the other. They're too used to leaving everything to me. They receive the information, but they don't read it, so at the end of the day they don't know what's going on (Rita, President of the Executive Board Main School).

This is why, for example, some Assembly members were clearly dominated by others:

> The agenda of the school assembly continues to be drafted almost completely by Rita (memo field notes, end of 2000).
>
> Rita still chaired the school assembly meeting, even though Amélia, the president of the assembly, was there. The excuse was that she had lost her voice, but the truth of the matter is that she was completely in the dark about the subjects under discussion, as well as the way the meeting was run. All she did, at the end, was to thank everyone for attending (field notes, Main school, July 2001).

The competitive advantages [7] enjoyed by a considerable proportion of the new executives and former heads over other organisational members should not, however, be taken to indicate a "smooth" and straightforward transition from "teacher among teachers" to "chief executive" (see also Chapters 1 & 4). The pragmatism displayed by teachers in accepting the formal transition to the new management model did not prevent them from reacting, on occasions quite violently, against changes introduced into their schools by the implementation of SBM. Among issues that stirred up major controversy were the disempowerment of the School Board, the curbing of classroom autonomy and the performance of new managerial duties by teachers.

Disempowerment of the School Board

Public debate of Decree-law 115-A/98 centred mainly on the issue of parent participation. This discussion overshadowed other important changes introduced by the new management model in primary teaching, such as the transition from a system of direct democracy (centred on the School Board) to a system of representative democracy (school assembly, executive board, pedagogic board). It was only when the process was already at an advanced stage that many teachers realised the practical and political implications of the change. At Main School, for example, the raising of awareness was the result of

[7] Familiarity with the legislation; experience

the suggestion of the Executive Council, to move a pupil to another class (said pupil was Carolina, the daughter of one of the most active members of the parents' association), with no direct opposition from the Pedagogic Board (representatives of teachers, parents and ancillary staff), but with stiff opposition from the Teachers' Committee (the old "school board"). This triggered a row about the new organisational rules:

> Rita: The hardest part of the new management was trying to convince people that the School Board (or Teachers' Committee, as it came to be known) no longer had the same power. People were very used to voicing their opinions at staff meetings, and although we already had autonomy, people didn't realize that things had changed. If it hadn't been for the problem of Carolina's class-change this year, people would probably have gone on thinking the same until the end of the year.
> M: Can you elaborate on that? That point interests me a great deal.
> Rita: The others were up in arms about Carolina changing class. They wanted to stop her moving. They wanted to call a Teachers' Committee meeting to overthrow the decision. They thought the Teachers' Committee could overthrow the Board of Studies' decision: they couldn't believe that a Teachers' Committee representing 27 teachers could be helpless to reverse the decisions made by 12 (Pedagogic Board). So we had to convene a Teachers' Committee meeting to explain the situation. That's when I asked Lucília (Regional Education Office) to let me have the jurisdiction, so that people could understand the process. And although I was very diplomatic, and didn't say so in as many words, I was able to show them that the Teachers' Committee amounted to nothing at all. I let it be understood that there are only four bodies running the school, and that the Teachers' Committee is merely a department, a curricular extension of the Board of Studies. And I believe that when people were confronted with this chart, which shows quite clearly which body is responsible for what, only then did they realize that the new model had made sweeping changes. And that's when you could see that people were starting to get worried. Up until then the groups hadn't really worked. People didn't get together. Nobody had taken this seriously. They thought that coordinators went to Pedagogic Board meetings, but that they would never decide anything without first consulting them. You see? Fátima - one of the main opponents of the new structures - was one of those who argued that the coordinators couldn't decide anything at

> the Board of Studies because they had to consult their colleagues first. She went as far as to make a phone-call and arrange for someone to come over from the Union, but I said, "Look, Fátima, I'm sorry to say this, but you're not talking to someone who's ignorant of the law. And you can phone whoever you like and get information from wherever you like, because I'm quite sure of my ground. I know the legislation and I know that there's nothing in the law that says that year-coordinators can't decide on behalf of their colleagues - it was they who elected them to be their representatives. Anyway, it was at that meeting that people finally understood how much things had changed. That was the meeting where Isabel Rebelo, who's a down-to-earth type, came out and said, "All right, so the bottom line is that we can't decide anything any more". I thought that was rather amusing and said, "Right, Isabel, the bottom line is that you can't decide anything any more. You can voice your opinion whenever you like, but you can't make decisions".

Although relieved of power, the Teachers' Committee (formerly the School Board) continued, throughout the period of observation, to be a focus of "political activism". In an attempt to prevent some of the "mudslinging", the president of the Executive Board of Gama School sent out an internal memo, on the advice of the DREL (Central Administration) to the effect that the Teachers' Committee would henceforth be convened only at the formal request of at least half the teachers. Even so, he was unable to halt its activity completely.

The New Organisational Context and the Loss of Teacher Autonomy

The importance given by teachers to the Teachers' Committee may seem strange given the limited functions it seemed to play during the *democratic management of schools* [8] and the fact that, at the beginning, teachers reacted more against parent participation in schools than against the new organisational structure. However, it must be borne in mind that the teachers' plenary had long been the main channel through which teachers defended their autonomy (individual) and asserted their power (internal):

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[8] see Chapter 4

> I think the idea is so deeply rooted in everybody's [teachers'] minds that they had some say in the way things were run. And the old model had been going for so many years, so many years . . . since '75, wasn't it? It's so deeply rooted that it's hard for people suddenly to change their mindset and think, "Now we have representatives. They're the ones who are going to decide, not me. It's very hard" (Dulce, deputy head, Pessoa School).

However, it was not only these historical considerations that justified the "closing of ranks" within the Teachers' Committee. It was therein that still lay the main collective power of the teachers.

> A: People like the Teachers' Committee; they like things to be decided there, like in the old school board meetings. Except that now it's a body without any deliberative power, because it's the Board of Studies that makes the decisions.
> M: But why do they prefer the Teachers' Committee?
> A: Because at Teachers' Committee meetings they're in a large group and, well, there's always strength in numbers, isn't there? And a large group has more clout than one representative per school year. On the Board of Studies there's one representative per year - hardly more than six in all - and they're responsible for the school projects. At the old staff meetings there were 27 people, all turning out in force with the same opinions, so they had real decision-making power (Armanda, deputy head, Main school).

The new school structure, on the contrary, now imposed restrictions on the role of internal policy-making played by teachers during the "democratic management" of schools. Not only were teachers dispersed among the various new bodies, which diminished their perception of the organisational workings of the whole (unlike the case of the President of the Executive Board), but also the particular features of the new organs inhibited and altered the involvement of many of the teachers:

> I also think, from what I can see, *that there are people on the Board of Studies who act differently when they're at Teachers' Committee meetings from how they act at Board of Studies meetings.* It's as if they were afraid of being exposed. What's more, they don't really know the community, so they seem inhibited by the presence of community-members at Board of Studies meetings. That's what I think (Rita, executive board, Main school, my emphasis).

Indeed, in the case of Main School, the changed demeanour of certain teachers almost certainly derived from the presence of *upper* middle-class parents at Board of Studies and School Assembly meetings. As far as I could see throughout the research, the presence of these parents curbed both the criticisms directed at parental behaviour and the declarations of unconditional self-denial on the part of the teachers (including by implication the "moral" superiority of the latter over the former). This was not just the result of the new coexistence. The parents' representatives, especially at Main School, adopted from the outset a highly critical stance towards what were described as teachers' verbal excesses:

> There's a very curious attitude on the part of the teaching staff, which can be seen, for example, at the school assembly. They look at the parents' association as if it should be held accountable for the attitude taken by each of the parents. We are accountable for the attitudes that we, as representatives of the parents, adopt and we try to dissuade the other parents from taking attitudes or getting involved in situations which, in an organised and institutional sense, we consider inappropriate. But there's no way we can be held responsible for a parent who has verbally attacked an education auxiliary, or a teacher, or a leisure-time supervisor. This is the message we have been putting across at the school assembly (Jorge, parent representative and leader of the parent association, Main school)

In addition, aware of the power of the community in which they worked, many of the teachers preferred to stifle the criticisms they would otherwise have made:

> Fátima V. always reacted negatively to Carolina's parents, but when we had that meeting, she agreed to everything the father demanded. He banged the table twice and she accepted everything (Rita, President of Executive Board, Main School).
>
> Behind the scenes, people are always criticising the parents, saying they do this or they do that; but they are not in a position to say these things to their faces. Francisca, for example, was one of the most outspoken at Teachers' Committee meetings. But when she was brought face to face with the parents, she was incapable of saying a word (Rita, President of Executive Board, Main School).

The fear of criticising families was not unfounded. Indeed, the parents themselves were aware that the new model represented a major threat to the teachers' power and solidarity. "The teachers were always on the defensive, and secretive about a lot that went on in the school. Now that there are parents' representatives in the school, the teachers can no longer gang together to hush things up; they all come out into the open" (Patrícia, President of the parent's association, Main school).

And in fact problems very quickly started to "come out into the open". Within a few months of the implementation of the new management model, one of the most influential of the parents' representatives at Main School had resigned his post (Dr Joel). His resignation was far from discreet: it was accompanied by an open letter to the community in which he made a variety of ironical comments about the running of the Board of Studies and openly criticised some of the teachers' representatives, including the president. As a result of this attitude, the parents' association also drafted a "warning" letter to the school. Against such a backdrop, it could hardly escape the teachers' notice that a "new era" had begun in the school.

> We have to have a sense of civic responsibility, as is the case in our association, and resign when we feel we can no longer be of use. And this is precisely what Joel did. Constraints on his intervention meant that he could not participate effectively [protraction in the taking and implementation of decisions]. He therefore simply resigned. "Everyone understood perfectly what had happened. Whether they like it or not, *teachers can't go on deluding themselves that things haven't changed*" (Jorge, leader of parent association, Main school).

The change in attitude of certain teachers was not entirely due, however, to the presence of members of the community. It was also a response to the different political climate that separated the Teachers' Committee from the new organs of school management. Indeed, during this transitional phase, the teachers with sympathies closer to traditional bureaucratic/professional concepts were under-represented in the new organs of management, although they continued to participate actively on the Teachers' Committee. This under-representation

was the result both of the reluctance of these teachers to be involved in the new organs of management and of the influence exerted by school executives in the composition of the membership lists. The new managerial structures were therefore composed of individuals occupying "micropolitical" positions close to the school executives, or ones with little institutional influence:

> When at the beginning of the process we elected the new organs, all everybody thought was, "I hope it's the one in front, or the one on the other side, anyone but me". And we ended up with coordinators who were doing the job for the first time (Rita, President Executive Board, Main school).

The support of these new representatives for the new managerialism (or mere resignation, in some cases) did not, however, equip them to deal with the pressures brought to bear by their peers on the Teachers' Committee. Accordingly, even among teachers with important positions of responsibility in the new structures, there were examples of sudden *volte-face* in the move from one organ to another. These changes of opinion were then "justified", with greater or lesser skill, before the President of the Executive Council.

> Antónia (2nd president of the Board of Studies) came to tell me why she had changed her vote in relation to Carolina's class-change [on the Pedagogic Board she supported the change, whereas on the Teachers' Committee she voted against it]. She said she had done this because without the blessing of the new teacher it wasn't worth continuing to insist on the class-change (Rita, President Executive Board Main School).

> Lucinda and Cristina came up to me at the end of the Teachers' Committee meeting to explain why they hadn't backed my proposal to hold the end-of-year party in the Maria Matos Theatre. They thought their colleagues would be against it. So they voted for an open-air party, just to ensure that there would be something to mark the occasion. Even so, I was really annoyed when I left the meeting (Fernanda, 3rd President of the Board of Studies).

The "metamorphoses" of the representatives occurred particularly in situations which affected the teachers' professional autonomy, or when they were being subjected to excessive parental pressure. The reason the case of Carolina triggered such controversy was that it brought parental pressure and teacher

autonomy into confrontation at a high level. Indeed, not only was Carolina the daughter of one of the most active members of the parents' association, but class changes on grounds of bad behaviour were also one of the main internal taboos. Once the classes/groups were constituted, they remained intact and no alterations were "permitted", even in flagrant cases of unequal ethnic, social or sexual composition (see Chapter 3).

Despite the resistance, teachers in all schools had little choice but to acquiesce to various types of new interference in their daily routines (see also Chapter 6): restricted autonomy in the classroom (joint lesson-planning, year project, school project); less control over non-teaching activities (fixed timetables for year-coordination meetings, minutes); and tighter links with the community (participation of the Executive Council at parents' meetings, for example). School executives were, in fact, the first to admit that "school autonomy" imposed clear restrictions on teacher autonomy. "This process of autonomy is no simple matter. A lot of people [teachers] are against it because they see their freedom severely curtailed. In the old model, in practice, they did as they liked." (Inês, PEB, Sta. Maria Consortium). The actual disempowerment of teachers, however, varied considerably from school to school. Following a period of bitter conflict in all schools, which led to the "self-withdrawal" of the president of the steering committee of the Sta. Maria group and the president of the provisional committee of Pessoa School, power relations developed quite differently in each case. Because Main School and Gama School are particular examples of this contrast, I shall therefore now describe their evolution in greater detail.

"Transformational Leadership" and "Constrained Managers"

Rita (president of the Executive Board of Main School) and Joana (president of the Executive Board of Gama School) had much in common at the outset of the

implementation of SBM: they both had extensive management experience, gained through serving successive mandates; they were in charge of schools of a similar size (n° of pupils); both were extremely enterprising, having helped to set up various extra-curricular activities in their schools; and they shared management concepts very much in line with the official definition (school autonomy, team work, projects).

The main differences lay in the sociological composition of the two schools' population (upper middle class at Main School and socially disadvantaged groups at Gama School) and the career stages of Rita (middle) and Joana (end of career).

Their early experiences of SBM were also similar. Both came under fire from their peers and both went through a period of personal and professional exhaustion. Rita spoke daily of resigning (there were even rumours that she had threatened to take disciplinary action against her colleagues) and Joana got virtually no help with any of her administrative tasks.

> My colleagues refused to participate in the drafting of the documents [regulations and plan of activities]. They told me to my face, "You're getting so much money, so do it yourself (Joana, PEB, Gama School).

Joana, however, never managed to get beyond this phase of conflict. Rather, the antagonism persisted throughout the period of the observation, leading in the end to a virtual breakdown in relations between the executive council and the majority of teachers. This breakdown was evident in a number of ways: in actual testimonies from the executive council; in the difficulty in forming teams, thus forcing duties on teachers newly arrived at the school (president of the Board of Studies, year-coordinators); in the breakdown in personal and professional communication, which was reduced to notes and messages conveyed via third parties; and by the gradual loss of confidence of precisely those who had initially supported the executive board.

Thus, only those neo-managerial concepts that were relatively well defined by the law - the operation of the new organs, drafting of rules and regulations,

institutionalisation of forms of middle management - were fully implemented, albeit with great difficulty.

> I was nominated as project coordinator behind closed doors, because the older teachers refused to participate. For them it would have been a victory if the executive council had failed to find anyone for the position (Miguel, President of the Board of Studies, Gama School).

By the end of the period of observation the executive council of Gama School was completely isolated and in disarray.

> At a teachers' plenary meeting, they even called the president stupid, to her face (Raquel, contracted teacher, Gama school).
> The executive board now communicates with the teachers and other organs of the school by letter (Lara, associate teacher, Gama school).

At Main School, the conflict between teachers and managers ended in a totally different way - with victory for the executive board, the departure of most of the "dissidents" and their replacement with a more "docile" group of teachers (see Troman, 1996, for a similar account in England). Although the turnover of teachers, combined with Rita's kindly persistence, played an important part in the process, it was parental pressure that seemed to have been decisive.

It was this pressure, sometimes exacerbated by teachers' personal problems[9] that led to the departure of some of the less conformist/compliant teachers from Main School: Sara (pedagogic clashes with parents), Maria (pedagogic clashes with parents and the case of "Bruno"), Margarida (the case of Carolina), Francisca (the cases of Afonso and André), Antónia (forced to resign as president of the Pedagogic Board)[10].

It was reports of the bitter conflicts of the previous year (which also included the "relieving" of three teachers of their teaching duties) that also prompted the new teachers readily to accept the work-rules that Rita was striving to introduce despite the reluctance of many of her colleagues: joint planning, periodic evaluation, "standardisation" of the kind of activities carried out). The parents'

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[9] Sara became pregnant; Maria's daughter finished primary school, having changed schools

role in the process was, moreover, attested by virtually all those interviewed: "when the new teachers arrived, they started saying, "Last year the parents did this... last year the parents did that" (Simone, associate teacher, Main School)

Thus it was that Rita managed, after a particularly tumultuous year (March 99 to June 2001), to recover the trust and prestige she enjoyed in the community. She also went ahead with changes in professional and organisational standards that went far beyond the requirements of the legislation itself:

- *She completely restructured the room allocation of Main School,* demanding that all classes of the same year should be given in the same block (despite legislation that gave priority of choice to the older teachers).

> There are details that people attach no importance to, but that are actually very important, like the fact that teachers with the same year are all under the same roof. That way they can be at the door, controlling the pupils and at the same time arranging or reflecting about an activity (Rita, PEB, Main School).

- *She turned the tasks of monthly planning and termly evaluation of activities into routines.* In addition, she introduced ways of overseeing the work done by teachers in this field (minutes of meetings, reports on activities, meetings with teachers and colleagues responsible for projects).

> Last year I suggested that they kept minutes of group meetings, and organised files for lesson-plans, worksheets and things like that. But Margarida immediately started moaning about the work. Isabel Rebelo too. But this year people accepted the idea, partly because a lot of those who rebelled last year are no longer here. And if they are, they're in such a minority that, well, they had no choice but to conform (Rita, PEB, Main School).

- *She put pressure on teachers to participate in several projects and responded to practically all requests for collaboration* (research work, teaching practice, use of the school for parties):

> You know I'm not authoritarian, but there must be someone to coordinate things and know what's going on. Because if you

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[10] The objectors remaining at the school had little in common in terms of age, pedagogic outlook and type of organisational involvement (Simone, Fátima V., Amália, Isabel R.).

> don't oversee things like that [projects and school activities], nothing gets off the ground. And I want a school that's different. That's why I had a meeting this week with all the different years. I had a meeting with the fourth year to talk about the Spanish projects and I talked to several groups about educational backing (Rita, PEB, Main School).

- *She contributed to the institutionalisation of practices to strengthen organisational identity and to manage human resources* (Christmas lunches, some birthday celebrations, end-of-year excursions, handing out flowers at the end- of-year ceremony).

- *she created internal structures congruent with the new legislative orientations* (she delegated responsibilities to middle management, concentrated on the definition of internal policies and wholeheartedly supported orientations from above.

> This year in the holidays I thought a lot about the way things went last year. I took stock of what had gone wrong. And I realized that I just didn't have time to do everything: talk to parents, mediate the conflicts that always break out in groups, accompany planning, oversee the office and the administrative side. And I thought: it doesn't always have to be me that attends group meetings, it doesn't always have to be me that commands respect. A lot of those things (minutes, intervals between meetings) are laid down in the regulations. The members of the group know the rules, and the coordinators are there to make sure they are complied with. And I also delegated a lot to Arminda (deputy head). Another of the good things about this year is that the president of the Board of Studies has the same approach as me. If there are problems in the schools, we agree about how to solve them. Things are much more shared. Last year I spent my whole time acting as fireman, putting out fires. This year I am free to concentrate on more important things (Rita, PEB, Main School).

Some of these measures are not *per se* distinctive features of neo-managerialist concepts: they could equally be included in a strategy of participant management. The application of the designation "neo-managerialist" comes from the manner in which they were defined, implemented and legitimised. Indeed, it should be mentioned that many of the directives were defined against

the wishes of the majority of the teachers in the school, only being finally asserted after successive refusals, because of "battle fatigue" (Fátima V., senior teacher, Main School), and at the "cost" of the departure from the school of many dissidents (in some cases teachers with a strong professional commitment).

On the other hand, although Rita was otherwise extremely pleasant in her relationship with the teachers, any opposition to directives from above was promptly and firmly dealt with. Indeed, having previously only exercised her authority over her colleagues by appealing to their professionalism and sense of duty, she now went as far as to take to task, in no uncertain terms, teachers who offered resistance to the new internal and external directives: assessment (Simone, associate teacher); re-allocation of classrooms (Isabel R., senior teacher); lack of *support for* school trips (Amália, senior teacher); non-participation in social activities (teachers of the second year, coordinated by Amália).

Furthermore, "Rita was known to be 100% behind the reforms," (Simone, Main School). Ideological sympathies also became an important criterion in the "co-opting" of colleagues into the carrying out of important tasks in the running of the school (presidency of the Board of Studies, year coordination, coordination of projects).

> I called people into the office and said, 'Look, I think you'd make a good year or project coordinator. I'm talking to you to get your reaction, but I'm quite prepared to talk to the group about it as well.

Major opponents, on the other hand, were kept away from positions in which they might be able to wield influence:

> This year I've been banished. Last year my work was down there in the gym. But they got rid of me and now I'm locked up in here (Fatima V., senior teacher, Main school).
> Fátima V. is a born leader. You only have to look at the knack she has for organising and motivating groups (Rita, PEB, Main school).

Besides political co-option, Rita did a great deal within the school to legitimise the new managerial concepts: she made the school available for formal ceremonies to mark the signing of partnership contracts between the State and companies; she treated teachers very differently according to their institutional involvement; she justified the institutionalisation of forms of "contrived collegiality" in terms of the needs of the organisation (minutes, files); and she institutionalised the practice of requesting financial returns from companies providing services within the school - even when opposed by one of her deputy heads.

Moreover, she showed no reservations whatsoever about the value of the new managerial concepts, which she reasserted whenever an opportunity presented itself. She was even writing a master's dissertation on the subject of "school culture" (autonomy, team work, partnerships with parents).

Common Patterns of Change

Having compared the situations of Main School and Gama School in terms of the implementation of the new SBM regime, I should emphasise that the type of work carried out by Rita (Main School) did not differ significantly from that done by other executives in similar circumstances. The main difference was a greater penetration of neo-managerialist concepts at Main School. Furthermore, the teachers themselves were aware of a common current of change running through a number of primary schools, especially in larger schools located in middle-class areas.

> At Princess School, where I worked last year, it's just the same. It's another very large school, with a lot of projects, and very active parents (Manuela, associate teacher, Main school).

This current of change was particularly noticeable in the following areas:

(1) Concern with the standing of the school.

This tendency was most noticeable in the rush to be a part of projects and other ventures that might enhance the image of the school in the eyes of the public

and the central authorities (competitions, games open to the community, pedagogic seminars). There were also signs of a certain preoccupation with non-teaching aspects of the school. Thus there was a clearly fresh concern with security (door-keepers), appearance (purchase of new overalls for the staff, decorating, minor structural alterations) and social relations (exhibitions, "sumptuous" end-of-year rituals)[11].

(2) More rigid hierarchical relations between managers and teachers.

The implementation of SBM led to a substantial differentiation in salary, functions and status between managers and teachers. There was even a change in the leadership style adopted by the executives:

> Sometimes you would hardly recognize Rita [President of the Executive Board and former Head]. In the old days she would listen to colleagues and rarely oppose them (Diana, associate teacher, Main School).
>
> Nowadays Rita gives orders and the others obey."(Nazaré, assistant at Main School)

Such testimonies would suggest that "leadership style" is not simply a question of personal choice, but an artefact of the managerial discourse through which reform is articulated. The legislation provides a set of opportunities for, and legitimation of, new "leadership" styles and the possibility to exercise new modes of authority.

It should be stressed, however, that those school managers who cut themselves off completely from the rest of the teaching staff, either because they were excessively authoritarian or because they concentrated more on administrative issues, were forced in the end to withdraw from the process (1st president of the Sta. Maria grouping; 1st president of Pessoa School), or else found themselves hampered at every turn (Gama School). The power of the tradition of closeness that existed between directors and directed, a legacy of the Revolution, was not totally destroyed with the implementation of the new SBM model.

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[11] "the school leavers party was a veritable wedding. Everyone was dressed up - parents, teachers and pupils" (Rita, PEB, Main School)

(3) Importance of financial considerations in school activities.

As already indicated, there was an increased concern, on the part of the schools, with the securing of external financial funding (hiring out of the kindergarten for birthday parties, widespread requests for financial sponsorship and equipment from companies supplying services to the school). And this included the pedagogic area: it became almost obligatory to participate in programmes and projects that would help to generate financial, human or material resources. Also, different levels of priorities were applied to projects, according to the funding received.

(4) "Dissolution" of the frontiers between the public and private sectors.

The emphasis given to financial returns and the increase in the number of partnerships led to a certain dissolution of the frontiers between the public and private sectors in the day-to-day running of the schools. This created problems in a number of areas: the establishing of property rights (who would the computers belong to if the contract with the computer company were terminated); the scheduling of activities (uncertainty as to whether the promised funds would be forthcoming); the exercise of authority within school boundaries (incidents involving Leisure Time Activities and affecting the overall image of the school, despite independent management of LTA). These differences were resolved through an increased formalization of relations with social partners, thus strengthening the "contracting out" process typical of contemporary societies.

(5) New cultural structure (*pragmatism, compliance* with *directives from the central administration, consideration for the "consumer"*).

One further effect of the rhetoric of autonomy, present in the public discourse of reform, was that the schools placed emphasis on the internal resolution of day-to-day problems (*pragmatism*) and the marginalization of those teachers who adopted a more critical stance towards families, the central administration

and the actual internal management of the schools (pressure for conformity and *compliance*). School executives, once again, played a vital role in this process.

> I don't want trouble-makers here. I don't want people who say, 'Look, Rita, I don't think that's right'. I want people who do something about solving problems (Rita, PEB, Main school).

> Last year the teachers complained about everything, even because there wasn't room for everyone at the lunch table. This year it's changed. There are different sittings for lunch, and no one complains. And that's how it should be - solving problems rather than creating them. It's the same with attacking parents; you don't hear half the criticism you used to hear" (Rita, PEB, Main School).

Despite being, by and large, elected by their peers, they to a great extent set themselves up as representatives of the higher authorities, supporting and overseeing their instructions and orientations. This particular brand of "leadership" was based neither on the implementation of personal managerial concepts nor on support of local initiatives. Rather it reflected a marked submissiveness in relation to the central administration and to the prevailing managerial paradigms[12] : the concept of the school as a united body that transcends different social identities (pupils) and professional cultures (teachers); the quest for total institutional involvement on the part of all members of staff (managers included); and the "opening up" of the school to the community (families in particular) .

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[12] Having presented this picture of the evolution of neo-managerialist perspectives in Portugal, it is important to stress that they progressed in a way not entirely unrelated to the old beauro-professional cultures (see also Clark & Newman, 1997). The *modus operandi* of school executives during this transition phase represented, paradoxically, one of the clearest signs of the possibility of "overlap" between the two forms of organisation. Indeed, it was the beauro-professional characteristics of many school executives that made a decisive contribution to the cultural and organisational transformation of Portuguese primary schools: a strong sense of duty with regard to orientations from the central administration and a tremendous capacity for self-sacrifice to deal with the loss of respect and steadfast resistance from colleagues

The cultural homogeneity displayed by school managers should not be separated from the strong hierarchical tradition characteristic of Portuguese primary education: another aspect of continuity through change.

SBM and Community Participation

Encouraging schools to be more responsive to parents and the demands of the community was one of the fundamental objectives of the new SBM model. Accordingly, the legislation limited the number of teachers[13] allowed to attend the School Assembly, the principal decision-making structure, and delegated to this body a wide set of responsibilities:

- for the definition of local educational policies (approving the educational project, the school regulations, the guidelines for producing the budget and the proposals for the school's autonomy contract).
- for keeping abreast of and evaluating the various proceedings (checking progress reports on the plan of activities, the results of the school's internal assessment process, and the balance sheets).

In addition, the School Assembly ensured that parents were represented on the Board of Studies, albeit in no fixed proportion to the number of teachers. Again though, the organisational impact of these directives varied considerably according to the context and location of the school (see Table 16). Indeed, in schools with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, the families participated neither in the debate concerning the new management model nor in the drafting of the school's internal directives. Moreover, they were either not asked to elect their representatives, or did not come up with nominations (Gama School and Main School respectively).

[13] Less than 50%

Table 16 - Parental Participation

Areas of Participation	Middle class schools (Main/Pessoa Schools)	Lower Class school (Gama/Magalhães School)
Public Debate and Explanatory Sessions for Parents	Yes	No
Choice of parents' Representatives	Nomination by the Parents' Association	Invitation of the Executive council (Gama school); Not nominated (Magalhães School)
Communication among parents' representatives	Yes, especially at Main school	No
Liaison with those represented	Through Parents' Association and Parents' meetings	No Liaison
Work groups (school regulations and project)	Yes (Main school)	No

These differences cannot be considered as peculiar to the transition phase. Indeed, at the end of this research, three years after the beginning of the implementation of the model, the parents of Gama School had still not managed to form an association:

> At the beginning of the year there was one extremely interested parent, who dealt with all the necessary documents for setting up a parents' association. And we're still waiting, because he couldn't put it together and lost interest (Graça, PEB, Gama School).

The situation was not so very different at Magalhães School. The parents' association never showed much interest in the new forms of participation and, following the end of the mandate of one of its most active members, ceased nominating representatives to the new school bodies:

> This year there are no parents' representatives at the School Assembly. Last year the president of the parent's association went, but hardly ever: on one occasion he arrived late and on another he didn't turn up at all. And this year they didn't

> nominate anyone. They don't seem very interested in the Assembly (Clara, Magalhães School).

The absence of elected representatives was settled at Gama School by means of invitations sent out by the management ("political co-opting"). However, no channels of communication were created either between representatives and parents, or between the parents who attended meetings of the different bodies. In this way, the parents had little political clout when it came to safeguarding the interests of the families. Testimonies reflect the isolation and vulnerability of these members:

> There is very little we can do in these circumstances. You are on your own. There is no Association, no one you can discuss things with. I don't even know the parents who go to the School Assembly (parents' representative on the Board of Studies, Gama School).

> The parents try to voice their opinion on the Board of Studies and at the Assembly, but they always hold back. Because they're known as the parents of such and such a pupil, they won't speak on behalf of the other parents or of an association. They're afraid it'll be taken out on their child (...). And the parents are also easily disarmed: "you can't do that because of the law"; "there's no point in writing to the DREL because the answer will be no" (Madalena, contract teacher, Gama School).

In middle class schools, the parents were aware, as we have seen, of the increased power conferred on them by the new management model: better access to information, the possibility of "brandishing" the public image of the school, certain changes in teachers' attitudes, more direct influence on the decision-making process. They did not, however, attach a great deal of importance to these new powers:

> In other schools the new model will have a greater impact than here. For a long time we'd been doing a lot of things that this new model only made official. And there are others that we shall have to go on solving in other ways, just as we had already been doing through contacts with the Town Hall, the local education authority and the school board itself (Rafael, Parent Association, Main school).

In fact, a major part of the power of upper middle class families lies in their ability to wield different types of influence at the same time - pressure by certain groups of parents on particular teachers, pressure on management, easy access to information and the central administration, exploiting the right to intervention (see also Chapters 4 & 6).

Socially underprivileged families, on the other hand, as we shall see in greater detail in the next chapter, not only find it difficult to exercise their right to intervene, as provided by the law, but also find it difficult to challenge or contradict the teacher. In schools catering to such families, pressure for change is exerted almost exclusively by the executive council or group coordinators, with the backing of a restricted number of "supporters" (Magalhães School) or by teachers in an institutionally precarious situation (the case of newly-arrived teachers at Gama School).

Although the new management model also involves the participation of the local authorities, their sphere of influence has in fact been minimal, and limited mainly to the following:

- making a certain amount of information available concerning local authority projects, backing and initiatives;
- lending a more ceremonial atmosphere to certain public events and commemorations.

Moreover, the action of local authorities nationwide, according to the Evaluation Commission report, has been remarkable for its detachment (Barroso, 2001).

To sum up, the main beneficiaries of the "opening up" of the school to the community, as advocated by the new model, would seem to be upper middle class families and managers working in these catchment areas.

Conclusions

The new school management regime was a project initiated by the State, as opposed to a response to direct or indirect demands on the part of social

partners (Afonso, 1999). The way in which it was implemented, by means of tight deadlines and meticulous regulation of the administrative procedures, served to reinforce the centralist matrix of the venture. However, the process was not without a certain change of attitude on the part of the central administration.

The new management model, however, did not stop at re-inventing the traditional kinds of dependence in Portuguese schools. It also made a decisive contribution to the institutionalisation of directives (drafting of school projects, flexible curricular management), mechanisms (internal evaluation, differentiation of duties and status between managers and teachers) and forms of regulation (widely standardized evaluation, increased parental participation) in line with the new neo-managerial paradigm.

This research would suggest, therefore, that Portuguese educational administration is going through a process of change that is not restricted to the purely formal sphere. The organisational structures and practices of Portuguese schools are being redefined along lines reminiscent of the principles of neo- and post-Fordism and, in a more general way, the processes of "conservative modernisation" taking place in various other countries.

Furthermore, the research highlights the point that the impact of the new managerial concepts depends largely on the school's catchment area, the experience and resistance of the staff, the chosen strategies for change and the style of leadership (see also Bowe *et al*, 1992; Arnott & Raab, 2000, Osborn *et al*, 2000).

The research also shows that the implementation of SBM considerably affects power relations within the school. The differentiation of duties between school executives and teachers, together with the creation of middle management structures, are the main modifications registered in this domain. Concomitantly, emphasis must be given to the important role played by school managers in legitimising and implementing the new SBM model: open support for the reform, the drawing up of lists of candidates, the co-opting of representatives, the marginalization of "detractors", defence of the new management

instruments, and closer contact with the families. It thus confirms that "management is both means and end in the reform process" and that school executives are key figures in the bringing to fruition of the new political and managerial concepts (Ball, 1994, p71; see also Arnott & Raab *et al*, 2000).

It should however be stressed that "transformational leadership" is only one of the facets of a wider penetration of the "entrepreneurial culture" in schools. This process also includes, in the case of Portugal, the following ingredients: changes in concepts of professionalism; concern with the image of the school; blurring of the frontiers between the public and private sectors; new ways of coordinating and managing duties; contracting of the relations between social partners (see also chapter 6).

In schools attended by middle-class pupils, it is clear that families now have more say in the running of the school (Main School and Pessoa School). This does not derive, however, exclusively from the areas of intervention created by Decree-Law N°115/98. It also has to do with the complex array of instruments and mechanisms which middle-class families can turn to their own advantage (see also Chapter 6). Meanwhile, in schools attended by less privileged pupils, parental status remains unchanged: the scenario continues to one of almost total separation between the school and the family. In these cases, there was not even a *pro forma* participation, through the nomination of parents' representatives.

There is also confirmation here of the risks associated with processes of democratisation of public services based on an abstract notion of "civil society" which ignores the processes of stratification and the power relations that are embedded in social and community contexts. The current research demonstrates, in fact, that the institutionalisation of parental participation in the school does not in itself constitute a factor in the democratisation of education. It is important to bear in mind the way in which the accepted practices of "choice" or "voice" are bound up with the cultural features of the different social groups (see Davies *et al*, 1989; Reay, 1998; Silva, 2001; see also Chapter 6).

As an example of "evolution in continuity", an expression frequently used in the final phase of the dictatorship, the local authorities have also continued to

keep a largely low profile. In this regard, the new management model has, at the time of writing, mainly contributed to a better exchange of information between the two spheres and improved mutual support of local initiatives of a "festive" nature (inaugurations, exhibitions, Christmas and end-of-year parties). Portuguese schools remain, largely, "local services of the state" (Formosinho, 1988).

Dependence on the central administration is fuelled by the way in which school executives view their role, which is far closer to that of "middle manager", representing the central administration internally, than that of true local leader. This situation may be the result of a number of different factors: the severe administrative constraints imposed upon primary education during almost the entire twentieth century; the persistence of a strong ethic of public service, based on the premise that the State is well-intentioned; the central position occupied by the State in this process of institutional reform, as opposed to the low profile of representatives of civil society (including academic and scientific institutions, which were more "cooperative" in the process than analytical of it). While not underestimating either the importance of these factors, nor the great selflessness displayed by certain school managers [14], the latter were among those with most to gain from the process of "devolution". Indeed, their professional situation was considerably improved by the new management model: their salaries rose in relation to those of other teachers; they no longer had to perform teaching as well as administrative duties; and they had the benefit of a variety of support structures (secretary, assistants, vice-presidents and year-coordinators). In addition, they gained additional credibility in a number of different areas: culturally, due to the superiority attributed to school executives by the neo-managerial concepts; operationally, due to the defining of new powers and prerogatives; and professionally, because of the legal sanctioning of prerequisites for the post (training and experience).

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[14] Rita, for example, maintained an unflagging dedication to the school, even during extremely difficult moments in her private life, including the discovery of cancer at an advanced stage and the death of her husband in tragic circumstances.

For all these reasons, the new school management model may be said to spell the "death sentence" for the "teacher among teachers" tradition which for decades characterized the position of school managers in Portugal. It is also, as we shall see in the following chapter, an extremely important component in the restructuring of the cultural, organisational and identity matrix of Portuguese primary schools.

CHAPTER SIX

CHANGING TEACHER'S WORKPLACE AND CONCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONALISM

The impact of School Based management (SBM) on schools has been the object of an ongoing debate that has highlighted the changing nature of teachers' work, conceptions of professionalism and working conditions (Hargreaves, 1994, 1998; Troman, 1997, 2000; Menter *et al*, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Smyth *et al*, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002). In this chapter I shall attempt to summarize the most relevant aspects of this debate and to point to the transformations that have taken place in Portuguese primary schools - as places of work - as a result of the implementation of the new system of administration and management (Decree Law 115-A/98). The chapter will be divided into three sections. These will include, first of all, some of the main perspectives on the nature of restructuring schools and of teachers' work; secondly, the impact of new social and organisational structures with respect to teacher identity and working conditions (intensification, control, school hierarchies) and finally, the changes in power relations between "producers" and "consumers" associated with the new SBM model.

Primary Education, Market and Post -Fordism

Traditional representations associated with primary teaching conjure up an apparently idyllic world: a simple, cosy, almost family way of life - a universe where there is no place either for the aggressiveness characteristic of the business world or for the technological complexity and sophistication so often associated with new forms of labour organisation. However, divorcing themselves from this dichotomous vision, some authors have researched the impact of the marketization of education and the new organisational paradigms on the daily life of primary schools. Menter *et al* (1997), in particular, have argued that:

> in the transition from Fordist to post-Fordist regimes of accumulation, educational organisations have a key role. They are charged with the production of a differentially-skilled workforce divided, according to Soucek (1994) into three tiers: "highly skilled professionals and other core workers; specifically skilled peripheral full-time workers; generically-skilled peripheral part time workers or casual workers". Part of the production process involves the mirroring by educational organisations of these three categories of product within their own workforces (p22).

These authors also argue that the work of the market is not confined to introducing choice and competition into education provision. A very important component of the new agenda for education is concerned with the transformation of teachers' professional cultures and with forms of organisational restructuring based upon a corporate managerial approach (Blackmore, 1996; Ball, 1994, 2001). In the case of primary teaching, this transformation focuses essentially on the reshaping of the culture "of autonomy in primary school work and amateurism in its management" (Menter *et al* 1997, p15). The process of change is apparent in various aspects of the activity of primary teachers, namely those which involve the redefinition of professional duties, the creation of new management structures and the appearance of new school hierarchies.

Professional Duties and Delegation of Responsibility

The responsibilities of teachers have been widened in the form of extra duties, particularly in relation to curriculum management and the new administrative requirements (Menter *et al*, 1997; Wallace & Huckman, 1999). These changes may be characterised, as suggested by Woods *et al* (1997) in terms of the dilemmas, tensions and constraints that they produce in relation to teachers' work.

Dilemmas are "social situations in which people are pushed and pulled in opposing directions", in a cultural context, "which produces more than one

possible ideal world, more than one hierarchical arrangement of power, value and interest" (Woods, 1997, pp 20-21).

The restructuring of primary schools would seem to be producing a change in the origin and nature of primary teachers' dilemmas, which are shifting from the pedagogical sphere into those of curriculum, assessment, administration and global societal values (Alexander, 1995, Woods *et al*, 1997). At the same time there is a proliferation and intensification of contradictory situations and pressures which are affecting the very process of restructuring: vision and voice, mandates and menus, trust in processes and trust in people, structure and culture.[1] Furthermore, some of these dilemmas are turning into tensions and constraints:

> Tension is the product of trying to accommodate two or more opposing courses of action where choice is limited or circumscribed. Thus dilemmas become "tensions" where factors beyond the teacher's control impede decision-making (...) If dilemmas are personal and tensions are situational, constraints are structural, in the sense that they are beyond personal resolution within the immediate context. Constraint implies compulsion, force, repression of natural feelings. Constraint operates against the choice of perceived better alternatives (Woods *et al*, 1997, p21).

In the Portuguese reforms constraints are visible in different areas, namely in attempts to institutionalise "cultures of collaboration", whole-school planning, responsiveness to consumers, internal and external assessment, new organisational structures. These structural requirements have resulted in striking differences between present-day and traditional working conditions: an escalation in the number of meetings teachers are required to attend; difficulty in focusing-in ("pulling in different directions"); overplanning; negation of the identity or potential of teachers as "highly collaborative and highly autonomous professionals" [2].

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[1] see Hargreaves, 1998

[2] Woods et al, 1997, p29

However, these constraints do not necessarily imply a straightforward process of teacher "deskilling" or "proletarianisation". Teachers react to the reforms in a variety of ways (Pollard *et al*, 1994) and may also display some capacity for critical mediation in the process (Woods *et al*, 1997). There seems to be, however, considerable anxiety and frustration related to inadequate educational resources and professional support. Moreover, these feelings would seem to be expressed in situations of some interpersonal distrust (Menter *et al*, 1997; Moore, 2001). It is also worth mentioning that similar processes of work intensification seem to be taking place in other domains, such as health and public security, of the "welfare state": greater responsibility; increased paperwork interfering with "real" work; job insecurity; organisational or hierarchical scrutiny; preoccupation with entrepreneurism and consumer demands (Bottery, 1995; Clark & Newman, 1997; Menter *et al* , 1997).

The capacity for critical mediation in the reforms, at least in the educational context, seems to be related to various factors of a personal, professional and institutional nature: personal biographies and career trajectories; length of "exposure" to the process of change and capacity to exert some control over it; opportunities for "upward mobility"; existence of "collaborative" cultures and school context (Pollard *et al*, 1994; Woods *et al* 1997; Osborn *et al*, 2000). In other words, the distribution and form of dilemmas and tensions varies between institutions and between teachers.

New management structures

The research conducted by Menter *et al* (1997) indicated the existence of distinct changes in the management structure of English primary schools. Traditionally, these were run on a simple hierarchical system: head, deputy head , class teacher. The reform of school governance brought about a diversification of organisational patterns at this level of education and the creation of more complex processes of coordination. Many of the schools under analysis came to exhibit organisational features which had hitherto been distinctive

characteristics of secondary schools: forms of subgrouping, either by age-range or on a curriculum basis; senior teams.

This kind of modification to the organisational patterns of primary schools is confirmed by various authors, who describe a structure which gives rise to different types of management responsibility:

> *cross-school* organisation, for major coordination tasks potentially affecting all teaching staff (...); *departmental* organisation, for coordinating the work of two or more classes of pupils within a particular age range (...) curriculum coordination of one or, in a few cases, two curriculum areas (Wallace and Huckman, 1999, p58).

In a similar vein, Woods *et al* (1997) claimed that practically all the teachers they had spoken to had responsibilities for curricular management, "which included the supervision and the monitoring of the work of their colleagues" (p39). Their work also brought to light various risks and limitations associated with the new structures:

> It was the headteacher acting unilaterally who introduced the restructured system. It was not the outcome of collective decision-making, collaborative processes or even democratic consultation (...). The new system seemed designed to create role ambiguity (...). When role diversity means there is too much for the occupier of the role to do, this causes tension and conflict not integration and collaboration (p43)

These authors argue that the formal primary school structure exhibits features more closely resembling a "manipulative mosaic" than the "moving mosaic" promised by Toffler (1990).

New School Hierarchies

SBM has been presented as a management concept favourable to the creation of "flatter" organisations (see Chapter 3). However, this view is far from being either consensual or universal. In fact, several studies have stressed the particular dangers of the changes to certain socio-professional segments: deputy head (Woods *et al*, 1997); older teachers (Menter *et al*, 1997); peripheral

and casual workers (Robertson, 1996). These studies point to an increase in horizontal control and greater risks of "contrived collegiality" (Hargreaves, 1994, 1998; Menter *et al*, 1997; Smyth *et al*, 2000).

The reforms would also seem to have a different impact on males and females (Blackmore, 1996; Chapman, 1988), an issue which cannot be effectively addressed in this study, given the vast preponderance of females in primary education in Portugal [3].

Some authors, moreover, refer to an issue mentioned in the previous chapter, and in particular evidence during the transition stage to the new SBM model: the segmentation of the teaching profession based on the criterion of "political co-option". Indeed, some members of the profession may be given more autonomy than others, but only once they have passed what might be termed a "loyalty test" (Hanlon, 1998). "This implies that those who are prepared to "manage" on behalf of their employers may gain enhanced status and reward, but those pursuing the traditional welfarist agenda are no longer trusted and have to be controlled more directly" (Whitty, 2002, p69).

Furthermore, one cannot ignore the global background of "aggressive competition" against which the new political directives are being implemented. This may explain why some authors find that the new management models would seem to:

- display "modernist" trends towards a top-down, executive mode of decision-making rather than "post-modernist" promises of community participation and enhanced professionalism (Backmore, 1996).
- use the neo-managerial instruments "in a context that is arguably more neo-fordist than post -Fordist in character" (Whitty, 2002, p71; see Table 17).

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[3] only six of the teachers who participated in this study were men. With the exception of one who was on psychiatric sick leave, they all held coordination or management positions (both before and after the implementation of the new model)

Table 17

Post-Fordist Possibilities: Alternative Models of National Development

Adapted from Brown *et al* (1997, p175)

Finally, as education appears to be devolved from the State to an increasingly marketised civil society, "consumer rights" will tend to prevail over "producer rights" and "citizens rights" (Ball, 2001, 2003; Whitty, 2002). This is a phenomenon that has been identified even in countries where the system of parental choice has not been officially sanctioned (see van Zanten, 1996, 2002; see also Chapter 3).

The issues introduced above provide the points of focus through the remainder of this chapter.

New Organisational and Social Structures

Teachers' Professional Identity: New Practices, New Concepts

The institutionalization of SBM models has been seen as an important challenge to teachers' professional cultures and practices (see Chapter 1). The present study, would confirm this hypothesis. It shows, however, that this process is far

from being straightforward or automatic: changes both affect and are affected by local conceptions of professionalism. The research indicates both aspects of continuity and change in the professional identity of Portuguese primary teachers.

The continuity is evident in the survival of an identity matrix within which primary education is still seen as essentially a moral project centred on the children:

> I'm going to tell you what I always think and say: in this country it would never occur to anybody that we [primary teachers] hold the world in our hands. I compare the children to a treasure, a precious stone which only needs cutting. If we succeed in cutting it properly, we'll have a wondrous jewel. If not, ... (Sofia, senior teacher, Main School).

Moreover, as is evident in other contexts, primary teachers continued to regard their profession as much more than just a simple job (Nias *et al*, 1989; Woods *et al*, 1997). Professional problems went beyond the classroom and took over teachers' private lives:

> When you work with children, you can't separate things. You can't just close the classroom door and say, 'Well, that's that for today'. You can't forget that John's father has been sent to prison, or that Paula's parents are getting divorced. We end up taking the children's problems home with us (Madalena, associate teacher, Pessoa school).

However, in spite of the importance given to the children, an increasing number of teachers were finding it hard in their daily working lives to give due priority to them. This was most noticeable in the early stages of implementation of important legislative directives [4] or the performance of new organisational duties. The pressure of "school tasks" led, in some cases, to lengthy periods of inattention to the children:

> This is the first time in my life that this has happened. Here we are in January, and I haven't even finished observing all the children. It's been a very difficult time [putting into effect of the

[4] new organs of school management, curricular reorganisation

> new organs of management]. And now I'm president of the Board of Studies, it's going to be even worse (Amália, president, Board of Studies, Main School).
>
> This first term has been a disaster: first the releasing of balloons [out of solidarity with Timor], then the meetings and all those new documents [rules and regulations]. I'm utterly exhausted. And apart from that, I can't give the children half the attention I should (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

Other teachers expressed their tensions in more general terms: "These days we have to spread ourselves so thinly, what with parents, projects, meetings etc. And sometimes it's our work [in the classroom with the children] that suffers" (Érica, senior teacher, Pessoa School).

The teachers coped with these "tensions" and "constraints" in different ways. Some altered their scale of priorities according to immediate needs. Others adopted a more "political" attitude to the new responsibilities. Even so, there were many teachers who found it difficult to cope with the new pressures (see also intensification of work). The problems invariably arose when intense activity at school was exacerbated by family problems, special duties or parent pressures:

> Gilda went into a depression and was away for a long time. She came one day to hand in her doctor's certificate and just broke down in tears. She also had family problems. When personal problems are compounded by excessive pressure at school - all kinds of projects and exhibitions not to mention intense pressure from the class, because the children here are very active, almost hyperactive ...When you get both things together, there are always teachers who just can't take the pace ... (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

Patience with teachers' personal and emotional problems seemed, however, to be running out. Parents' complaints were increasingly frequent (teachers' late arrivals at schools, substitution of teachers, courses). It was also noticeable that there was pressure from the executive board for teachers to redefine their professional identity along more traditionally male lines, that is, a clearer separation between home and work, with priority given to the latter:

> Cristina F. is that dark teacher, the one who has a baby and is completing her training. She's a very difficult ... well, she never has time for anything, always rushing to be with the baby. I think we should organise our private and our professional lives. People just want to give their lessons and then rush off home without participating in anything. That's Cristina's case and people are going to have to start getting their priorities right (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

This attitude of "reconciling priorities" was in contrast to traditional orientations at this level of education, in which heightened sensitivity towards teachers with children of their own meant that the presence of even very small children (three months to three years) was accepted and even relatively common at meetings of the school governing bodies (field notes, Main School, 1st phase of the research). Moreover, having young children was one of the arguments used, in the previous phase of the study, to "justify" the fact that there was little team work.

These data would indicate, as suggested by Clark & Newman (1997), that the restructuring of public services has a powerful impact on the "private" world of family and community:

> To compete in the managerial career stakes now means demonstrating commitment through long (often excessive) hours and being able to cope with high stress. Staying on to be present at the crucial meeting to deal with the latest crisis has to take precedence over family, relationship or community commitments: whether the meeting is effective or not is sometimes less significant than being seen to have the commitment to be there (p74).

Rita's remark quoted above is also interesting because it shows that professional commitment is only recognized when harnessed within the strict confines of the school. Indeed, as the interview extract reveals, Cristina F. was attending a complementary training course, which in Portugal can involve twice as many hours as a Master's Degree course. However, this was totally irrelevant in Rita's (negative) assessment of her colleague's professional commitment.

I should, however, point out that pressures for change in teachers' professional identity did not, at this stage in the research, come only from management structures. Some of the teachers appeared, especially towards the end of the observation, to have taken on board certain aspects of the new professionalism. This was most noticeable in respect of support for team work, which was being viewed in a way that went beyond the earlier parameters of personal and professional affinities.

> I consider that even when there is no great personal *rapport,* we should all make an effort to work as a team. Besides, the parents around here know the school well, and if colleagues are seen to be working well together inside the school, it shows on the outside. Then people say, 'That school works well: it's a good school' (Catarina, associate teacher, Main School).

In the area of organisational investment, mention should also be made of certain teachers who have started to include school organisational dynamics among their reasons for opting for a particular school. The qualities of these "emergent professionals" were positively recognized by the executive board:

> In the selection process, both Teresa and Cristina were placed in schools close to where they live, but they preferred to stay here. I think that's an important decision. Cristina in fact lives in Ramada, and the school is right behind her house. But even so she's staying on here. She says it's a more go-ahead school, that she feels comfortable with me, and other things ... (Rita, president executive board, Main School).

> This year I was talking to two teachers who were placed here for the first time, and the first question they asked was whether lesson plans were done together, as a team. It seems that we are going to have a good teachers' group (Armanda, deputy head of Main School, at the beginning of the second year of school autonomy).

Changes in areas relevant to teachers' professional identity also applied to the process of evaluation. In particular, in this field there was increasingly frequent reference to the parents, in middle class schools, as a yardstick of "good

practice" [5]. These data suggest that, although the reform in school governance is only apparently in its infancy in Portugal, primary teachers nonetheless display patterns of change similar to those identified in other countries:

> Teachers' sense of personal and moral accountability as indicated by responsibility to pupils and to themselves as professionals remained strong but there is a marked increase in accountabilility towards colleagues and parents (...) Therefore teachers are now having to take into account a wider range of what might be seen as conflicting obligations (Osborn, 2000, p49).

This conclusion will be corroborated in the following sections.

New Responsibilities and Intensification of Work

The new governance of schools has brought with it new areas of activity for Portuguese primary teachers: wider-ranging responsibilities for the schools, new organs of management, middle management structures, internal evaluation. This transformation was reflected in the way teachers described their new daily school routine:

> In comparative terms, the new model means more work for the teachers. It takes up a lot of time because there are various organs and lots of meetings. There are lots of meetings because in the old days there was only the monthly School Board meeting, whereas now we have the School Assembly meeting, although not all the teachers are members, the Board of Studies, which meets several times a month according to the subjects to be discussed. Then we have the Teachers' Board meeting, and then, as our work is organised by years, we have the year-coordinators' meetings, which are usually monthly. And on top of all that there are sometimes special meetings, because of some project or party (Manuela, senior teacher, Main School).

This increase in responsibilities has not, however, been the cause of any generalized grievance. Indeed, with the exception of the phase in which the new structures were being put in place, and there was exponential growth in

[5] "The part went really well; the parents really enjoyed it","the community enjoys this kind of activity"

the number of activities in all schools, teachers' reactions to the new professional demands varied significantly according to their pedagogic ideas and to the locality of the school.

The main criticism, as we would expect, come from the teachers with a more negative attitude towards new managerial guidelines:

> Portugal has always been a bureaucratic country, which is why the schools have always been swamped in red tape. But now it's worse than ever. Everything requires a report, everything is bound by rules and regulations, everything needs evaluating, everything (Fátima V., senior teacher, Main School).

Conversely, teachers who looked more favourably on the new concepts also made light of the new responsibilities:

> I think the school has changed a bit - it's more open and more cooperative. In particular there is more cooperation among the teaching staff. Of course there's more work, but that's all par for the course (Cristina, associate teacher, Gama School).

> The school is very open and very go-ahead, and obviously higher expectations mean more work (Teresa, associate teacher, Main School).

Most of those interviewed[6], however, had a moderately critical attitude towards the increased responsibilities. This was not unrelated to the fact that Portuguese primary teachers continued to enjoy, in particular in schools with no parental influence or threat of closure, a considerably free hand in the management of their organisational investment (time spent in meetings, management of projects and group activities). However, in upper middle class schools it was a very different story (see producers and consumers, below; see also Chapter 5).

At Magalhães School, albeit for different reasons, associated with the desperate need to survive, there were also very few attempts to shirk the increased workload:

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[6] about three-fifths

> It's normal in schools to put on parties at Christmas and Easter, but in this school we are also virtually obliged to raise money for them - so we have to do more work. At Christmas we have to organise the party and then sell raffle tickets and goodness knows what else. So we're tired out and get to the point where the least little thing anyone says is enough to make us fly off the handle. We're always so touchy with each other, because we're so sick and tired of it (Rosália, associate teacher, Gama School).

There were, however, certain areas in which parental pressure, pressure from school governors and even pressure from the State (see the impasse in defining activities outside class time) proved to be totally ineffectual. Playground and lunch duty and free-time supervision have always been anathema to the teachers. The lowly status of educational support duties in Portugal (supervision of children, cleaning), associated with the absence of a "social" tradition in state schools, may go some way to explaining teachers' resistance to these kind of duties.

This resistance also shows that teachers adopt a selective attitude towards the heavier workload (see also Whitty *et al*, 1997). Their reaction depends not only on the *amount* of work but also on the *quality* of the new duties: reduction or enhancement of professional status, congruence or incongruence with teachers' frames of reference, professionalization or deprofessionalization. This assertion obviously does not mean that the issue of increased workload is purely figurative. Family and psychological problems produced by an ever more demanding professional life were mentioned by all those interviewed (including school executives).

Changing Teacher's Professional Roles and Forms of Control

An increased workload was not the only change in teachers' lives produced by the implementation of the new SBM model. There was also a redefining of their roles, which emphasised the non-teaching side of their activity. The new management model gave way to a complex organisational structure that consisted of four organs of management (school assembly, executive board,

pedagogic board, administrative board), one consultative body (teachers' plenary) and various types of co-ordination (year, nucleus, cycle and project). There was also, in the larger schools, the possibility of an advisory committee to the executive board. The more "innovative" schools also frequently set up work groups for certain activities, each specifically co-ordinated (school magazine, spring games, drafting and reformulation of documents). Indeed, the new SBM model, apart from imposing a wide range of management structures, also quite clearly favoured the implementation of forms of middle management.

The new organisational structures and work guidelines made evasion of administrative responsibilities extremely difficult. Thus something akin to a phenomenon detected in other countries could also be observed in Portuguese primary schools: "willing or unwillingly teachers were behaving increasingly as collaborative professional workers" (Osborn *et al*, 2000, p93).

Teachers' reaction to these changes varied, as has already been mentioned, according to their concept of professionalism and to the social context of the school. However, in general they welcomed the expansion of practices of cooperation, especially the "comfortable" ones (Little, 1990). This was not the case with the institutionalisation of the instruments of regulation of the new collegiate practices: minutes of meetings, organisation of lesson-plan files, recording of absences, drawing up of activity reports. The adoption of new forms of surveillance led to a particularly bitter conflict between teachers and managers. Parental pressure in middle class schools, the knock-on effects of the change itself and the marked mobility of teachers combined to enable managers gradually to impose forms of contrived collegiality:

> Last year I made the proposal [for files of lesson plans and minutes of meetings] and nobody agreed. Margarida said immediately, "What a lot of work!", and Julia also started protesting. But this year, when I produced the same proposal, there were so few dissenters that they had no choice but to accept [many of the more rebellious teachers left the school during this time]

> To begin with people grumble, but they gradually get into the swing of things, and even those who disagree eventually keep quiet (Rita, president executive board, Main School)

For the teachers there only remained, in some cases after prolonged discussions, a certain flexibility in the choice of timetable, in deciding the frequency of meetings and in the "implementation" of group decisions. Only at Gama School was resistance taken a step further: the "boycotting" of the recording of absences at intermediate meetings (third- and fourth-year teachers), of group activities in the school (parties, projects) and an attempted boycott of the actual formation of the new management bodies (see Chapter 5).

In the remaining schools, those who opposed the "new professionalism" could only resort to strategies of "incorporating" the new directives (Menter *et al*, 1997) and to denying that there was anything new about the practices derived therefrom:

> They say that it's terribly interesting and will have immense spin-off for the school, bla, bla, and so we start the project. Then there's the School Health project, and this project and that project. It's all fantastic for the school, and it's another project. And so on. When we get to the end of the year and take stock of all the projects, what has been done? They talk about the Health project and say marvellous, congratulations, you've done a lot ... and in reality nothing has been done, nothing at all that wouldn't normally be done (Cristina, senior teacher, Pessoa School).

It should, however, be stressed that at the school where neo-managerialist pressures were brought to bear most forcefully, the teachers managed to turn the new interactions between colleagues into something of a defensive barrier against the control exerted by parents:

> Parents in this area are in the habit of making comparisons [between teachers]. Last year we had a lot of problems with that, and the teachers were afraid. Now that we do our lesson planning together, they feel more confident. It stops a parent suddenly saying: "in the other class they're further on in the syllabus" or "my son hasn't got access to this or that programme". And even if the parents try it on, the teacher

> knows what's going on and can stand up for himself (Dalila, associate teacher, Main School).

Collegial practices also proved to be of considerable support in the changes brought about by the process of organisational and curricular reform in basic education. "This process of curricular reorganisation is driving us all mad. If it weren't for the support of our colleagues, I don't know where we'd be" (Simone, associate teacher, Main School). Indeed, keeping au fait with all the innovations was something that could not be ignored at Main School.

> When I arrived at school today, Armanda [the deputy head] was worried sick. The parents had handed in a petition making a number of demands on the school. The problem had come up in one of the classes, when a new teacher couldn't explain to the parents either what the project area was or the learnacy programme. You know yourself what these parents are like: they came round straightaway with a letter and endless demands. They want the school to give support to the teacher; they want a psychologist, and so on (Rita, president of Executive Board, Main School).

The new institutional rules and regulations were not accepted at Main School, however, without the conflict between "producers" and "consumers" taking on unusual proportions: removal of teachers with children from the 'chalkface' (3 cases); embittered retirements (2 cases); resignation of presidents of the Board of Studies (2 cases); voluntary transfers to other schools (at least six cases); and an indeterminate number of absences due to overwork.

This was why the President of the executive board frequently reiterated the importance of collegiate practices as a defence strategy against the local community:

> Newville is like a village, like a neighbourhood. The parents get together in the café and within seconds they all know what's going on in the school. And that's when the problems start: "my daughter hasn't done that yet" or "my son's class is behind the others". And it's all because the teachers don't present a united front. If they worked as a group and did their lesson planning together, there wouldn't be these complaints. That's what happened in the fourth year last year: there may have

> been problems, but the teachers were united in dealing with them (Rita, president Executive Board, Main School).

It should however be emphasised that the defence of teachers against parents was not the only reason why managers exerted pressure when it came to the institutionalisation of the new forms of collegiality (files, minutes, absences). Besides ideological factors, which cannot be underestimated [7], it was clear that the new instruments of regulation also made it easier to control the teachers:

> Last year there were conflicts within the groups; the teachers were fed up and eventually stopped planning or doing anything else together. I didn't know about it, because nobody called on me. This year it's different, because I see the reports and the files are in my possession (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

> Anyone who looks at these files knows practically everything that's going on in the school. The only thing you can't see is what people are thinking. Everything else is there (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

From the point of view of school managers, the new style of professional relations held the added advantage of making it possible to delegate responsibilities among middle management, in order to divide up the teaching staff (small units) and to help break up and settle institutional conflicts.

> It was lucky that we espoused the cause of middle management in schools. When there were no year coordinators, I was always having to chase the teachers, asking them for projects and lesson plans. I was constantly on their backs and had a lot more problems and trouble than I have now. Now it's the co-ordinators who take all the flak. Only the other day Luzia [the co-ordinator of the third year] said to me: 'Now I understand what you went through'.

While the organisational restructuring has gained strength, pedagogic practices have been given progressively less emphasis. Unless these traditional virtues were practised within the new framework of organisational priorities, they came in for criticism rather than praise:

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[7] like managers' loyalty to the administration (see Chapter 5)

> There have been a lot of battles in this school, and that's one of the reasons I was saying I had had enough - because you work and work and at the end of the day it looks as if you've done nothing. I'm actually conscious of my limitations, so I avoid getting involved in endless projects and activities. Otherwise I end up neglecting everything, even my class. For instance, at the moment I've got an autistic child in my class, and as I don't know very much about autism, I had to attend a training session on the subject. But people don't understand or appreciate things like that here in the school. It's just projects and more projects. That's what counts. Everything else is criticized. And even when I stay on late, it's always in the line of duty. However late we stay, it's never beyond the call of duty (Rosália, associate teacher, Magalhães School).

This type of problem serves to illustrate the penetration of a neo-managerial kind of peer pressure in Portuguese schools. Through such procedures, workers are encouraged "to adopt managerial concerns and behaviors to ensure their colleagues remained attentive to their tasks and aware of each other's level of contribution to the productive effort" (Menter *et al* , 1997, p65).

This process was especially noticeable at Main School, where the "dissidents" were actually publicly denounced:

> It upset me very much at the school assembly to hear that certain groups were not pulling their weight. We have worked just as hard as the others; it's just that it's with our pupils, in the classroom (Amália, senior teacher, Main School).

However, things rarely got to this point. Once the principal dissenters had been "defeated", the natural pride, sense of duty and traditional obedience of the teaching profession helped with the institutionalisation of the new practices:

> I think this [the formalization of collegiate relations] is like everything else. People have a sense of pride, and when they see others working, they don't want to be left behind. I love it when I see them talking together, to see which group has drawn up its rules [for the running of the year coordinations] and showing each other their files [of minutes and lesson plans]. They were so uncooperative at the beginning ... Now even Isabel [one of the leading dissenters] insists on being present at the year meetings. She's afraid they'll decide something she doesn't know about, and she'll look bad in the

> eyes of the parents (Rita, president executive board, Main School).

> Only yesterday we were discussing the curriculum changes that are going to be made, and I simply asked, "But is that imposed?" "No, but it came out in the decree, and has to be done." And that's where the trouble starts: we're all so concerned with toeing the line that nobody stops to think or question, or even give an opinion or say that we disagree. And I mean *nobody* . . .
> P. - But why is that?
> R.- When they talk about first-cycle teachers, there's still the idea that a woman is a wife and mother who is socially correct at all times and never makes waves. School is a continuation of that role, so in terms of teaching, nobody raises issues: things are defined and taken for granted, and we comply because that's the way it is (Patrícia, associate teacher, Pessoa School).

For all these reasons, together with a favourable political context, criticism of teachers who failed to espouse the new managerial directives became commonplace in schools, transcending the influence of the executives.

The changes in Portuguese primary schools have thus come into line with the neo-managerial model that inspired them:

> The government 's hope must be that the implementation of the systems and ethos of management will take root sufficiently to legitimise new mechanisms and routines and to make them appear to be self-imposed or collaboratively adopted (Raab, 1991; quoted in Menter *et al*, 1997, p64).

It was when it came to group activities that the changes were most noticeable (school magazines, exhibitions, parties). The previous segmentation was giving way to a solid thematic organisation, centred on each school year and on the respective project, and this was of no mean importance in terms of the professional image projected. There was an increasing obligation to participate in these activities:

> Last year, when we wanted to put on an exhibition, to do our bit, we started on the basis of 'who will do what?'. The result was that people brought things and left them, and it was up to the others to organise it. This year we did things totally differently, and what I said to Rita was, 'yes, there are projects, there are magazines and there are exhibitions, but each year is

> responsible for them. I don't care whether it's A or B or C. For instance, we put on a Christmas exhibition. And what happened? All the teachers in the group were in the gym, putting up their work. Each teacher was responsible for the image they projected (Simone, project coordinator, Main School).

The actual terminology used, especially at Main School, reflected this movement of change. Non-teaching activities would be dismissively labelled as "paperwork" or "red tape" (reports on projects, statistics charts). By the end of the period of observation, they had been "elevated" to the category of "[good] organisation": "This must be the best organised primary school in the country: there's an index-card, a circular, a report for everything" (Simone, project co-ordinator, Main School).

Changes in pedagogic practices were less noticeable: "You can see that there's more sharing of duties in the school, for instance when it comes to exhibitions and group work. But in [classroom] practices it's another story. It's more in terms of curricular objectives and projects that things are shared. In terms of strategies and teaching models, there still isn't much collaboration" (Joana, senior teacher, Pessoa School).

This "exchange" was limited due to the fact that most of the teachers were already set in their ways. Thus, similar to what happened with previous forms of spontaneous cooperation, most teachers used group work as a way to enhance rather than redefine their own practices:

> We get a lot out of exchanging ideas and worksheets with each other. But a deeper change is another thing . . . after so many years, we all have our own personal style (Ermelinda, senior teacher, Main School).

Participation in organisational projects or programmes for inter-school cooperation was governed by similar principles".. Teachers would "slot" the new activities into the core curriculum, but not integrate them fully into their teaching routine:

> As we've all got these new projects, we have to make time for them. So whenever possible, we take time out of the syllabus to get ahead with them (Francisca, associate teacher, Pessoa School).

> We have to be able to organise and manage time so that we can devote a bit of time to the projects. In practice, we divide up our time.
> E - And how does this time division work?
> S - Mostly we occupy the time as we used to in the old, traditional days, with academic and arts subjects and school textbooks. Then we have to divide up the rest of the time between the projects. There are also projects that have something to do with the syllabus content and are, let's say, complementary (Sara, senior teacher, Main School).

In this respect, the penetration of the new management concepts continued to be greater in the administrative than in the pedagogic domain, thus confirming trends reported in other countries: managerialism and managerial discourse focus more on the systems of organisation than on teaching and learning in the classroom; see also Ball, 1994; Webb and Vulliamy, 1996, Menter *et al* 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1997, 1998; Osborn, 2000).

In the case of Portugal, there were other specific factors which helped to perpetuate the separation between organisational and pedagogic dynamics; school executives continued to show a certain respect for privacy in the classroom, with inspection concerning mainly formal and administrative aspects (planning, minutes, class composition); external evaluation was in its infancy, so that the image of the school depended largely on its sociological composition and degree of "initiative" (projects, extra-curricular activities, logistic structures).

The new pedagogic organisation thus meant, essentially, a certain standardisation of practices in a limited number of areas: syllabus progress rates, special activities (study visits, projects), use of educational resources (worksheets, assessment sheets, textbooks). The "epicentre" of this

standardisation was the school year. Whole -school planning, "school culture", the school project, and flexible organisation of work (projects, activities, functional areas) were barely noticeable in the majority of the primary schools under analysis. Taken together, the changes mentioned suggest a restructuring process closer to neo- than to post-Fordist models. The use of the designation "neo-Fordist" to describe the process of change in Portuguese primary schools does not mean that this is to the exclusion either of aspects relating to development in bureaucratic rationality or of certain projects and practices developed along more post-Fordist lines (see Chapter 5). It is a matter of emphasis.

In this respect, however, it should be emphasised there were considerable differences between the schools under analysis. These differences went from token compliance with the legislation (Gama School) to distinct over-conformity (Main School) in a variety of ways: the importance of middle management (effective delegation of duties, connection between fixed and flexible structures, degree of formalization of activities); redefining of space (creation of nuclei, according to the different school years); an attempt to bring together all the services in the school (objectives and basic practices). In spite of the thoroughgoing process of organisational and curricular restructuring they had managed to put in place, the directors of Main School were determined to extend the area of convergence with the new management concepts:

> At the year level, things are now running really well. On the school level, there's still a lot to be done.
> I've been thinking and wondering . . . It was a good idea to set up these new pedagogic structures (year coordinations), but they can also bring their own problems. You lose the true dimension of the school, the idea of a school culture and project. That's why I'm going to set up other groups, with teachers from different years, for the school magazine and other things, so that there's more flexibility in the teams and the projects. We did this, a bit, with this year's Christmas exhibition. Each group was responsible for collecting materials for the notice board, by theme and not by year, as used to be the case. This way we're taking stock and breathing new life and

> impetus into the school (Rita, president executive board, Main School).

New Protagonists, New School Hierarchies

The implementation of SBM models, by helping to expand and highlight managerial roles, has brought about significant changes in the social structure of Portuguese primary schools: it has widened the gap between managers and teachers; created a more complex social matrix, due to the diversity of the new managerial duties; and resulted in the emergence of new sources of social prestige and legitimacy.

The "senior" teachers whose professional identities favoured the pedagogic role, were the main losers in this process (Menter *et al*, 1997, Woods *et al*, 1997; Woods & Jeffrey, 2001). Even in schools with the greatest resistance to the new managerial concepts, the influence of the more experienced teachers was gradually eroded. Exclusion from the new management structures, either self-imposed or through political co-opting, proved to be a fatal strategy for many senior teachers. They lost (direct) access to information, the chance to air their opinions in the new organisational structures and the ability to influence school policies. They were reduced to "boycotting" tactics, which lay them open to the accusation of wanting to do absolutely nothing. In addition, they saw the rise of new local protagonists, favoured by the new judicial and institutional framework: presidents of a variety of bodies, advisers, coordinators, parents' representatives (in middle class schools).

This process varied in intensity from school to school, being less rigorous at Pessoa School [8] and Magalhães School (where the only senior teacher was also acting head). Conversely, it was completely overwhelming at Main School, where the main supporters of the new management concepts were at the intermediate stages of their careers (including the headteacher herself). The loss of power of senior teachers at Main School is clearly illustrated by the descent

of Amália, who, within the space of a few years, was relegated from a leading role (president of the school assembly) to a walk-on part, with occasional periods of actually being "persona non grata":

> I'm very hurt by the attitude of the executive board. When I had an accident, they didn't even phone me. My colleagues rang me, and even some of the new teachers. But from them [executive board], not a word. It seems hardly possible, after so many years (Amália, senior teacher, Main School).

> Amália is always complaining that nowadays everything is done through Fernanda (president of the board of studies) - everything through Fernanda (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

The rapid penetration of the new managerial concepts at Main School also proved fatal to the expectations of career advancement nurtured by certain senior teachers on the basis of traditional professional patterns.

> Now that Armanda has retired, I know that Alexandra and Isabel are expecting to be offered the job of deputy heads. They're the longest-serving teachers in the school, and they've already sent me messages: "that they're close to retirement, that they deserve a rest, that they would then keep the increment when they retire". But tell me honestly - how can I offer them the job? I need people who'll help me, not people who, if they think fit, will turn against me (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

At the end of the period of observation, when the idyll of collegiate relations had worn off (see Freire M., 1992), there were also conflicts of a pedagogic nature. These conflicts mainly arose when teachers found themselves barred from doing projects or activities other than those officially prescribed and/or when they considered there was nothing to be gained by joint planning and reflection, because of ideological, material or personal obstacles. However, the prevailing institutional logic was increasingly of a technical and instrumental nature: organisation and formal regulation of year groups, projects, tasks and collegiate relations.

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[8] a long history of "innovation", in which many senior teachers took part, smoothed the change at this school

The new school protagonists were teachers who felt empowered by the new managerial concepts: an admix of "emergent professionals" (Pollard *et al*, 1994) and "manager teachers" (Woods *et al*, 1997). It was this type of professional that managers strove to retain in the school, using the parents' support if necessary:

> Patrícia (parents' representative) and I are not going to stop pestering Lucília (Regional Education Department) until she assures us of the continuation of Lutécia (co-ordinator of the third year and candidate for the post of school adviser) (Rita, president executive board, Main School).

In schools where family influence was in evidence, this was rarely restricted to institutional support for management decisions. In middle class schools, the "customer's gaze, installing an ever-watching eye on the workforce" (Menter *et al*, 1997, p65) was more than a mere figure of speech. On the contrary, it represented one of the major constraints with which teachers had to contend on a daily basis.

Producers and Consumers

In market and neo-managerial systems producers are supposed to respond to consumers' wishes and interest. In this section I shall attempt to identify the changes in relations between producers and consumers that took place with the implementation of the new management model in Portuguese primary schools. This analysis will take into consideration the fact that family influence may assume a variety of forms: choice (or exit); voice (institutional participation and representation) and micropolitical activity (power, influence and "covert regulation").

Choice

In Portuguese schools, practices of parental choice date back to before the new management model (see Chapter 4). They were in evidence in middle and upper middle class schools, especially when located close to main trunk routes,

and potentially involving some "switch" between the public and private sectors[9].

The reform in school governance, by making compulsory the formation of groupings among the smaller schools, introduced a new facet into this process. Schools with pupils considered to be "difficult" were gradually shunned by their potential partners: Park School refused to be grouped with Ameixoeira School for reasons which included the social status of its pupils[10], while Magalhães School circumvented the risk of association with certain schools with a large gypsy population by promptly joining the Santa Maria grouping (Clara, president executive board, Magalhães School)

These processes of exclusion cannot entirely be attributed to the teachers' desire not to have socially disadvantaged pupils in their classes. They also derive from the conviction that many families evaluate (and stigmatise) schools more on sociological than on educational grounds:

> This school is a Castelos school (wealthy Lisbon suburb), but in reality it is nothing like a Castelos school. It became associated with the ethnic minorities from the clandestine shantytowns in the area, and that was enough to turn many parents away. They prefer to send their children to Pessoa School. Even when Pessoa School is full and they have to register them here, they get them transferred at the first opportunity. And remember that the main ethnic minority here are Indian children, who are very quiet, well-behaved and applied to their studies (Joana, PEB, Gama School).

Ironically, the results of the external evaluation of Gama and Pessoa Schools were very similar, despite the marked demographic difference between them. This fact did not prevent a rapid decline in pupil numbers at Gama School, while Pessoa School continued to be extremely popular. These data would suggest that parental choice of school, even when covertly exercised, as in

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[9] It was possible to identify differences in strategy between middle class families (and the different "social strata" composing them). It was not possible, however, fully to investigate these differences (see Ball & Vincent, 2001 for an analysis of this question in other contexts).

[10] Ameixoeira had an even more disadvantaged school population than Park School. Besides this, Ameixoeira made the additional "mistake" of putting a kindergarten teacher in charge of contacts related to the formation of the consortium

Portugal, will make things difficult for schools located in socially deprived areas (even when they offer a quality educational service).

Different Voices

The institutionalisation of mechanisms of "voice" in Portuguese schools, as favoured by the new management model, would not seem to have been enough to compensate for the risks of increased differentiation inherent in the new managerial concepts. On the contrary, it gave rise to new problems and new inequalities: lack of representation or political co-opting of less privileged families; non-existent channels of communication between representatives and represented in these schools; "participation by assimilation" (Friedberg, 1988). It should be stressed, however, that the differences in "voice" associated with the process of stratification can by no means be entirely ascribed to the limited participation of more disadvantaged families in the new management organs. Rather it constitutes a problem of a more global nature, taking manifold forms in the various schools, and contributing to the differentiation between them.

Excluded voices and "supporters"

The first phase of this research showed that there was, indeed, an intractable divide between schools and socially disadvantaged families. This situation remained largely unchanged following the transition to the new management model. Even in schools priding themselves on good relations with the families, collaboration was limited to the informative and the social: parents attended termly meetings, helped with parties and provided specially requested materials. Meanwhile, they hardly ever openly challenged the teachers' decisions: "The parents here don't normally raise problems. It's very seldom that you get one of those parents who just won't let things rest" (Clara, president executive board, Magalhães School).

It should be stressed, however, that even the schools that found themselves in the midst of "excluded voices" and "reluctant supporters" found it more difficult to ignore the pressures brought to bear by the new managerial concepts. Indeed, the fall in the birth rate, together with the social stigmatisation of schools with a higher number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (and ethnic minorities) placed these schools under the threat of closure or drastic "downsizing". This problem could only be tackled through a systematic public demonstration of the quality and the breadth of initiative of the school (as in the case of Magalhães School). In such cases, "giving in" to the new managerial concepts was virtually inevitable, especially in smaller schools with a greater and more immediate risk of closure.

"Hybrid Citizens"

If working class families rarely entered into "dialogue with the school"[11], frequently due to the conviction that they were not supposed to do so unless summoned by the teachers[12], the same cannot be said for the middle classes. The latter would often keep the school of their choice under close and comprehensive surveillance. In addition, they were not afraid to voice their disagreement on a variety of subjects. Even when they exhausted the possibilities of negotiation with the teacher or head, they did not give up without a fight. They submitted formal complaints in writing, either to the school or to the authorities. Through such protests, concern with preserving the image of the school or the teacher was gradually eroded (especially at Main School). The criticisms expressed in these petitions, newspapers articles and "letters to community" became increasingly more explicit:

> The parents' association used to talk to the more difficult parents and try to reassure them. Nowadays it pressurizes the parents to write to the Regional Department and air their grievances against the school (Antónia, president, board of Studies, Main School).

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[11] see also Vincent, 2001

[12] see also Dias, 1985; Davies *et al*, 1989

> The parents were furious because the school didn't open when they wanted it to. So, of course, they went straight to the new papers to kick up a fuss (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

At Pessoa School, albeit in a less intense and regular form, a similar process of criticism took place. In addition, the Pessoa School parents' association did away with a fixed budget for financial support to the school, replacing it with selective financing of projects that they considered of greater importance.

It was at Main School that the teachers' loss of autonomy was most evident and far-reaching. Even so, many of the parents still thought of the organisational restructuring carried out at this school as insufficient.

"New Consumers"

Much of the stress and strain suffered by teachers and managers in middle class schools was not so much the result of pressure exerted by the official representatives of the parents, who were sometimes partially assimilated by the representation process itself (Silva, 2001), but of pressure exerted by certain active minorities. At Main School, these minorities were mainly composed of parents who supported a definite convergence between the managerial practices of the school and those typifying the private sector:

> You [the head] must tell them [the teachers] what to do. It should be like it is in companies. If you're a good worker, you get support and incentives. If you're a bad worker, or don't want to work, you're out. It's as simple as that (meeting of a small group of parents and the head teacher, convened because of the problem of teacher substitutions, September 2000, Main School).

The same kind of pressures were brought to bear at some parents' meetings:

> The parents' association is presenting an extremely cursory activity report. We need to make a more thorough evaluation of the teachers and staff, and the quality of pupil interaction

> provided by the school. Everything should be quantified and written down: the number of absences and late arrivals of each teacher, the discipline problems encountered in each class, the number of times and the way in which the parents' association intervened in each particular case (father, parent's meeting, field notes, 21.6.2000, Main School).

Although in a minority, consumer parents were nonetheless extremely active in Main School micro-politics. They were also on the increase at this school:

> The attitude of "Newville" parents has changed a lot lately. There are more and more parents who think I should run this school like a company. They work in those big companies themselves, where everything is decided by money and dismissals, and they think that I should do the same. (Rita, president, executive board, Main school)

It should also be mentioned that the Main School parents' association, in spite of putting up a certain resistance to the more radical intentions of the "new consumers", eventually adopted many of the latter's ideas on relations with social partners. Contracts with service companies and cooperatives, originally made informally by word of mouth, became increasingly formalized and subject to periodical evaluation (LTA, food, cleaning, language centre). Former partners, e.g. the LTA "The Adventure" and the "Speakeasy" school of languages were replaced by others offering more competitive advantages and whose "loyalty" was guaranteed by temporary contracts that could be annually reviewed and rescinded (based on parent surveys and Parents' Association opinion). In this way, an unbridgeable gap was created between core professionals (permanent or semi-permanent teachers), semi-peripheral workers (contract teachers) and peripheral workers (LTA monitors, language and computer teachers, art and other support teachers). This differentiation between professionals, likewise noted in other countries, had serious consequences in terms of salary, status and job security. In addition, this signing of contracts with partners released the management of the parents' association from minor managerial duties and enabled them to concentrate their attention on defining and evaluating educational policies:

> There are parents' associations with colossal budgets that directly run leisure-time activities and the canteen. We chose to do things differently, using outside service companies. This year we managed to get these contracts signed, with renewal dependent on periodical reappraisal. This leaves us free for other types of intervention (Hermínio, parents' association, Main School)

It was thus more and more difficult to distinguish between (hybrid) citizens[13] and consumers in the school. Moreover, the micro-political activity engaged in by both sectors often became confused and mutually reinforcing.

Micro-Political Activity

Power is both implicit and explicit in relationships between parents and professionals (Todd & Higgins, 1998). Despite the fact that this statement has been obscured by current educational policies, the professionals are well aware of the differences in power and influence that characterize the various social groups.

> I have to pay careful attention to the community I'm dealing with. If these parents don't get their problems solved in the school, they'll go to any lengths . . . They pick up their mobile phones and phone all over the place: the papers, the Regional Department of Education, the state secretariat, the unions (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

> Here the parents don't generally cause problems. They're very humble, well-mannered people. (Filipa, senior teacher, Gama School).

It was at Main School, as already mentioned, that the power struggle between parents and teachers was most frequent and acrimonious. Indeed, the sociological features of the neighbourhood, together with a great capacity for individual and group intervention, put the school under permanent pressure. In principle, not a single aspect of the running of the school was immune from controversy. Incidents were sparked off because of *logistical aspects* (the quality

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[13] for a description of similar processes in England and France, see Ball *et al*, 1995; Vincent, 2001; Van Zanten, 1996

of the food, lunch- and break-time supervision, hygiene and school security); *curricular issues* (syllabus progress rates, importance given to "academic" areas, scope and organisation of special programmes); *pedagogic matters* (teaching methods, discipline problems in classes, differences in ways of arranging the kindergarten rooms); *pupil relationships* (conflicts between pupils, rowdiness at playtime); *extracurricular activities* (setting and checking of homework, pupils' jobs at parties); *teachers' conduct* (absences, lateness, ways of "regulating" the children); *class composition* (in primary school and in the transition to preparatory school).

This type of relationship with the school highlights the complexity of the process whereby certain sectors of the "new middle class", in this case a segment with high educational qualifications and considerable social and political capital, attempt to reconcile their choice of state school with high academic ambitions for their children.

The dynamics behind school/family relations at Main School (and to a lesser degree at Pessoa School) also show that those Portuguese middle classes with a certain "cultural capital", no longer rely on the traditional processes of social reproduction - based on family dynamics and home tutoring - to guarantee the educational and professional future of their offspring. They therefore adopt a "professional model" very close to that identified in other countries: careful school choice, close surveillance of teachers' work and educational activities, and constant monitoring of the progress of their children (see Gewirtz, 2001, van Zanten, 1996, 2002).

Among the strategies most widely adopted by the Portuguese middle classes in the preservation of their social standing, stress should also be placed on their parallel choice of state and private education. In primary teaching, this combining of state and private schools means a richer school curriculum through LTAs and the various firms that provide "educational services" for

children (English, computer technology, music, sports). Indeed a double curriculum was being provided in middle class schools.

In these circumstances, it would seem inadvisable to count on predominantly administrative measures, like SBM or school evaluation, for the effective implementation of any policy of equality of educational opportunity.

It should also be stressed that upper middle class parents negotiated very carefully the inviolability of their class frontiers. An example of this was the complex negotiation through which they managed to thwart the central administration's attempts to balance the sociological composition of Newville schools (to which Main school belongs):

> Jorge (parent) - Last year the Regional Department of Education reclassified the school down there [known as "Africa School", because of its ethnic population], allowing it an intake of second- and third-cycle pupils. In this way pupils from Main School at the end of Key Stage 2 would be distributed between Africa School and Paloma School (the most upmarket middle school in the area). They wanted to find bureaucratic solutions to political problems [mixing pupils from Main School with poor pupils from the Franciscano neighbourhood]. These are integration policies which, as we already know, don't work. On top of that, the school that was reclassified is in a very run-down state (...) We were lucky enough to get hold of that information in time to act. It's not that we're a Mafia, but we do have contacts at practically every level of the system. So both parents' associations [Main and Paloma Schools] headed straight for the Regional Department of Education to have things out. We had to stand up for our rights. Of course, we came in for direct or veiled accusations of chauvinism and xenophobia, and the whole business was difficult and long-drawn-out. Some meetings took the whole day, with practically no time for lunch. But they couldn't get the better of us. At the third or fourth meeting we put our cards on the table: "either you play fair with us, and we continue negotiating round the table, or we'll look for other means - and you can be sure that we'll be successful". They knew that we weren't going to let the matter rest, that we'd go to court, to the press, whatever it took. But it was a very complicated negotiation. Some of the meetings were attended by all the top brass: the regional director, the two assistant heads, the centre of the educational area. But we reached agreement: Paloma School would "stretch" itself to take all our pupils and the Regional Department of Education

> would try to find a solution for the Franciscano pupils, especially for the seventh year and for the older pupils. So it all worked out in the end.
> I. - Did it really work out? Didn't the Franciscano pupils end up going to the run-down school, where there were already a lot of repeating students?
> Jorge - But those are the limits of our system. You can only integrate in small numbers. Whether we like it or not, we have to be practical.
> I. -But in that way, will it ever be possible to achieve integration in this country? Middle and upper class pupils would have to far outweigh the others ....
> Jorge - What I mean is this. I can't bring up my child properly, even with regard to the problems of integration, if those in need of integration disrupt the system. And that's what would have happened if the solution had been otherwise. Everyone knows about the schooling of pupils from the Franciscano neighbourhood and about their attitude towards the school itself.

This episode also clearly demonstrates the ability of Main School parents to put pressure on the central administration. If these parents got their way with these higher authorities, they would get it far more easily with primary schools (traditionally small and of lowly status). In fact there is no lack of evidence to this effect:

> This year the teachers refused to help with the organisation of classes at Paloma School [pupils transferring from one school to the other]. Last year there were tremendous problems and the parents all rounded on us. That's why this year nobody wanted to be involved. The one who eventually took on the job was a mother, who is also a teacher at Paloma School and who knows both sides of the problem (Rita, predident of executive board, Main School).

Conclusions

The way in which the "producers" and even the local and central administrative agents respond to the more powerful "consumers", on matters for which the former are strictly responsible, confirms the risks of deepening inequalities which various authors have associated with "devolution" policies

(Slee *et al*, 1998; Whitty *et al*, 1988; Ball, 2002; Derouet, 2002). It also shows how the process of "producer capture" can go way beyond the framework of responsibilities stipulated in the legislation. Even in countries where, in whatever form, a centralist matrix persists, many middle class parents "get what they want" (see Van Zanten, 1996, 2002). This possibility is confirmed by the thorough organisational overhaul that took place at Main School, and which in innumerable areas transcended the legislative directives. This by no means suggests that educational policies and directives are meaningless. In all the schools observed, there were professional and organisational changes in line with the new management model: work intensification (number of meetings, diversification of managerial duties); less autonomy for teachers in the use of non-contact hours, lesson planning and curricular management (files, minutes of meetings, year and class projects); the emergence of a new social structure, associated with the performance of new managerial duties and with the degree of "initiative" shown; difficulty in turning a blind eye to the "demands" of the market (constitution of school consortiums, management of school image and personal career); an increase in internal and external pressures to redefine teachers' professional identity and pedagogic practices according to neo - Fordist patterns.

This study shows, however, that the impact of the new policies varies considerably and depends heavily on the context of the school (social status of the families, location) and, to a lesser degree, on the organisational characteristics of the school itself (size, history of the institution, leadership "profile", number of senior teachers, and the organisational ability of the detractors).

In general terms, the transformative effects did bring about the realization of neo-Fordist concepts in the organisational structure of middle class schools and in the cultural and professional reorientation taking place therein. These processes, although facilitated by the directives contained in the new management model (project and school culture, differentiation between the

roles of school manager and teacher, formalization of school evaluation), only took place because of the heavy pressure brought to bear by middle class families. In this way new kinds of differentiation were created among Portuguese primary schools - in the pedagogic and organisational domains - which "compound" the process of differentiation that took place in the final phase of democratic school management (services, extracurricular activities, participation in "innovative" educational programmes).

While there are certain political directives that could help to attenuate this differentiation[14], there are nonetheless prevailing aspects which would seem to suggest exacerbation: legislation on curricular differentiation in basic education, publication of league tables in the press; competition between schools for the financing of projects and special activities (laboratories, arts); the appearance of forms of selective financing for schools (Alfa project, the role of local authorities in supporting certain projects and activities). Within this policy paradigm, middle class schools can count on the strong determination of the parents to preserve, and if possible increase, the competitive advantages available to them in the sphere of education.

> Without pressure, we don't get anywhere [reference to the setting up of the local kindergarten]. We'd like to enter into dialogue with the authorities on a friendly basis, but it's just not possible. We have to go in with our claws out, spoiling for a fight. We have to speak to the councillor, the Mayor, even to the President [of the Republic] if necessary. At parents' meetings we always say: "If there's anyone with useful contacts, please speak up". In institutional terms [formal intervention], we'll always do whatever seems most opportune and suitable at the time. But we'll also have no hesitation in exercising other forms of influence (Jorge, member of the parents' association management).

What this research suggests is that the emphasis on neutral and rational "improvements" in "quality" and "efficiency", when given by professional and

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[14] namely the further academic training of teachers, which might lessen their vulnerability to parents with higher educational qualifications

political advocates of the managerialist reforms, serves to obscure the opportunities for the advancement of middle class interests offered by these same reforms. In this way, the reforms may be interpreted, in part at least, as having their origins and purpose in the interests of particular class groups.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS

The period under analysis (1998-2002) corresponds to a time of major upheaval in the bureau-professional matrix, which dominated the running of Portuguese primary schools throughout almost the entire twentieth century. It also represents a process of non-linear convergence with the neo-managerialist and neo-liberal perspectives which, since the mid-eighties, have been at the forefront of the political strategies of various developed countries.

The process of change, identified in this research, began to make itself felt with the educational reform of 1986, a political venture carried out in the name of educational democratisation, but in which there were also visible signs of support for a mild form of the neo-managerial concepts: the generation of a certain air of crisis surrounding state education; the ascribing of problems in the system to bureau-professional structures (teacher "corporatism", administrative centralization); support of increased "freedom of education" and the assigning to school organizations of a major role in the processes of innovation and change. This then was the beginning of a new management cycle in Portugal, what I shall call the *"third edition of the democratic management"* of Portuguese schools, the organisational and professional consequences of which I have described in Part II of this research. This *third edition of the democratic management* of schools represented the *beginning* of the end of the traditional policy paradigm of educational centralisation in Portugal. This change in paradigm, though initially slow to get under way (1986-1998), was to gather momentum at the turn of the century with the institutionalisation of the new model of school management (1998), which represented an important landmark in the process of diffusion and consolidation of neo -managerial concepts in Portugal.

The *"Third Edition of the Democratic Management"* of Schools: Criticism of the Bureaucratic Matrix and Reorientation Towards "Educational Modernisation" (1986-1998)

Lima (1992) points to the existence of two distinct editions of the "democratic management" of schools in Portugal: a first edition, corresponding to the brief self-management experiment that accompanied the democratic transition (1974-1976), and a second edition, coming in the wake of the period of "normalisation" that followed the April revolution, which was characterized by a marked return to the traditional paradigm of political and administrative centralization of education (see chapter 1).

The present study would suggest that there is also a third version of the democratic management of schools, which began in the mid-eighties and was to develop, by fits and starts, into the definition of a new SBM model (1998). During this period there emerged a political discourse in line with the neo-liberal and neo-managerial perspectives prevailing in the closing decades of the twentieth century. There was increasing criticism of the Keynesian models for development and of the ways in which the public sector was organised ("less state, better state"). While this did not lead to a significant overhaul of the Portuguese public administration, the new political discourse nonetheless had extensive social repercussions:

- it legitimised the (re)privatization [1] of some of the more modern sectors of the Portuguese entrepreneurial network (Banking, telecommunications);
- it heralded a period of increased valorisation of organisational and administrative functions (Formosinho & Ferreira, 1998);
- it opened the way for the advocacy of (neo-)liberal models, which hitherto had garnered little support in Portugal, in a variety of business sectors.

[1] Many of them were nationalized during the Revolution (1974-1976)

In the educational domain, key indications of this *volte-face* were: the political debate that accompanied the educational reform (1986), with emphasis on the role of schools in the process of innovation and change (Dias, 1999); the change in the public's attitude towards state schools (França, 1993; Afonso, 1997; Dias, 2002); the attempt to reform school governance through the publication of Decree-Law N° 172/91 (Afonso, 1997; Estevão, 1995) and the support given to the spread of private education (especially higher education). With regard to institutional practices, which is the prime objective of this study, mention should be made of the Administration's attempts, without relinquishing power, to transform the schools into the "*nerve centres*" of educational co-ordination and innovation, to redefine the status of school managers and to extend parental participation in the making of decisions.

The (Re) Discovery of the School

Portuguese schools have traditionally been seen as "local services of the State" (Formosinho, 1989) and, as such, as the repository of instrumental decisions (ways and means) rather than of expressive decisions (goals of the organisation). The concept of 'school community' was restricted to those who came under the disciplinary jurisdiction of the State - teachers, general staff, pupils - and excluded both the "clients" (parents) and local bodies and associations. As peripheral services, schools had no real internal management: they were controlled from the outside, by the central services and "regional" departments, through normative dispatches, circulars and other legislation (Formosinho *et al*, 2000; Lima, 1999, 2001). Educational "crises", generally concurrent with major political upheavals, were handled by resorting to instruments of macro planning (the Republican, Salazarist, and "Marcelist" educational reforms and the "democratic" reform of '86).

However, the development and complexity of the system, together with international trends in the field of labour organisation, began to set the scene for the emergence of new patterns of educational regulation. Thus the central

administration itself, after harshly criticizing the bureaucracy and uniformity of the system, took it upon itself to "modernize" it: that is, the "decentralisation" of certain services alongside the introduction of mechanisms for the micro-regulation of schools (educational projects, plans of activities, standardised assessment). This process enabled the State to "achieve greater efficacy in terms of control and co-ordination, be in more direct contact with educational establishments and encroach upon their territories" (Lima, 1998, p19). Thus, there is a "paradox": a shift from a centralised system with local latitude to a system with local latitude which provides for pervasive central control. In a word, unobtrusively and without noticeable loss of power, Portuguese educational administration was beginning to realign itself with the paradigm of the "educating state".

In the case of primary and secondary schools, the approximation to neo-managerialist concepts essentially took the form of a revalorization of the organisational dimensions of schools (school culture, "extended" collegiality) and the increasing use of new management instruments, including whole-school planning and the carrying out of "projects". The third edition of democratic school management would therefore seem, to a great extent, to be an attempt to modify forms of labour organisation reminiscent of the entrepreneurial innovations of the eighties in the commercial sector (company projects, quality circles, corporate culture).

This attempt would appear, however, in the period spanning 1986 to 1998, to have been largely unsuccessful or half -hearted. Indeed, the first phase of this research, conducted at the end of this management cycle (1998), shows that, at least in primary education, the teachers remained to a great extent on the sidelines of the new management orientations. Their professional identity, with its distinct bureau-professional stamp, was focused on the children and the ethic of public service. Their professional careers and status were clearly predictable and based on given "objectives-indicators" (years of service in the profession, type of contract, years of service in the school). Their *sense of belonging* was determined by the profession (teaching) and by the level of

education (primary), with the specific workplace a very secondary consideration. The actual concept of the *school* was restricted to the traditional "environmental" factors (size, location, and pupils' social background) and had little to do with the importance attached by the new managerial perspectives to organisational aspects (school culture, transformational leadership, collegiality and new professionalism). The "collective" and the "organisation" were essentially perceived as a collection of autonomous pedagogic practices. Coordination was restricted to peripheral activities such as parties, study visits and excursions. The political regulation practised, particularly by senior teachers, was effectively more concerned with preserving the autonomy and diversity of each individual teacher's practices than with guaranteeing effective institutional coordination.

What is more, such instances of cooperation as were identified in this study had little to do with the neo-managerialist concepts of management:

- they consisted essentially of *pair-work* of a spontaneous, voluntary and non-formalized kind, in which personal affinities played a major role.
- the extent of peer collaboration was largely considered to be a matter of personal choice (support, exchange, joint work);
- joint decisions could be freely modified, deferred or even reversed according to the "dialogue with the situation" (Huberman, 1993).

These findings would suggest that the institutionalisation of mechanisms of "contrived collegiality" [2] established in the late eighties in Portugal, had little effect on the pedagogic practices of the majority of teachers. The influence of the new management concepts, among primary teachers, did not go beyond a generalized acceptance of the principles of teamwork. This acceptance, however, had more to do with models for "collaboration cultures" (Hargreaves, A., 1998) than with the principles of the "new professionalism" (Hargreaves, D., 1994). The segmentation of educational activity has continued to be the norm in the schools under analysis. The practices of Portuguese teachers, while

[2] school plan, school regulations

confirming the preponderance of practices of restricted collegiality in countries with a history of centralisation, are far from constituting an exception (Nóvoa, 1998).

There was, however, considerable pressure, both internal and external, brought to bear on teachers to redefine their identity according to parameters more in line with neo-managerialism (see Chapter 4). In models of "good practice", organisational investment began to outweigh pedagogic considerations. Pressure to (re)discover the school did not come only from the central administration. School directors and (upper) middle class parents played an essential role in the process of change.

The Redefinition of the Duties of School Managers

The strong tradition of political and administrative centralisation that was a feature of the initial development of the Portuguese education system allowed little scope for the emergence of strong local leaderships. The political co-opting of school directors during the Salazar period did not significantly alter this situation: the power with which directors were invested exempted neither them nor the schools in their charge from conforming strictly to directives from above.

The anti-authoritarian climate, which came in the wake of the 1974 Revolution, could easily have led to the development of local "transformational leaderships". However, after the brief self-management experiment, this climate would seem to have crystallised into a certain ideal of "collective" school management (Clímaco & Rau, 1988). The position of school heads could thus be described as "teacher among teachers". Their fellow teachers elected them for a short period, after which they returned to their old post if not re-elected. Their duties were limited, especially in primary schools, where secretaries were non-existent, to humdrum tasks of organisational co-ordination or everyday administration: setting dates for meetings, filling in "charts" (statistics),

enrolling pupils, managing subsidies, recording absences, organising correspondence and disseminating administrative directives.

The "low profile" of Portuguese managers began to change, however, in the mid-eighties, as neo-managerial discourses and directives took hold in Portuguese education. Among the most visible signs of this change were the accumulation and diversification of the duties of school heads, which were the combined result of three main factors:

- increased administrative demands imposed by the State upon the schools (drafting of school projects, school regulations, surveys, "references");
- contracting out of logistic support services and extra-curricular activities, with schools increasingly targeted by commercial and service enterprises;
- establishment of a new style of relations with the families and the development of "local" partnerships.

The new duties performed by school heads made them particularly aware of the new neo-managerial doctrines and brought about: more regular contact with the central administration, families and companies; gradual removal of teaching hours; greater exposure to training and information sessions about the reform process; and major local responsibility for the implementation of the new education policies. It should be mentioned, however, that the marked receptiveness of school managers to the new managerial doctrines, as revealed in this study, was not only due to political and organisational factors (increasing status and role differentiation in relation to colleagues). Indeed, the confluence of various decentralising agendas in Portugal, during the period under analysis, made it difficult, outside specialist circles, to establish a clear distinction between the different agendas (see Barroso, 1999). In fact, the Portuguese political discourse, like the one adopted in France, was not characterized by explicit support of market principles (though this has now changed). The language used was more euphemistic, based on appeals to modernisation, participation, assessment and quality (see Deroeut & Dutercq

1997; Barroso, 1999; Dias, 1999; Deroeut, 1999, 2000; Van Zanten, 2002). As result school managers were fairly easily "captured by the discourse" (Bowe *et al*, 1994).

The considerable cultural convergence detected in this study among Portuguese school heads [3] did not prevent them from doing very different jobs according to the size and catchment areas of their schools. Indeed, during the third edition of democratic school management, the modernisation of Portuguese primary schools depended to a considerable extent on the organisational ability and influence of the families. This was to have undeniable repercussions, as we shall now see, on all major aspects of the redefinition of the head teacher's role: espousal of the new political orientations, the setting-up of support infra-structures and the development of partnerships with families, companies and the community.

The Middle Classes and the Selective Modernisation of Primary Education

The declaration of the rights of Portuguese families to participate in the running of primary schools was, due to a combination of political and administrative factors, an extremely long-drawn-out process. Even after the democratic transition, the sanctioning of the right to form parents' associations was to take ten years (1984), while it would be two decades before parent representation on school boards was institutionalised (Silva, 1993, p253). Most schools remained, however, on the sidelines when it came to the new political directives: difficulties were experienced on a number of occasions in the forming of parents' associations, and family participation on the school board was the exception rather than the rule [4].

Thus relations between schools and families were, during this *third edition of democratic management,* still characterized by a marked separation which, in the

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[3] Including those directors who took part in the second phase of the current research (the only exception being the director of Avenue School, in the first part of the study)

[4] even where it existed, it was limited to matters of a logistic or extra-curricular nature and from the authoritarian political options underpinning the universalization of primary education in Portugal (dictatorship).

case of the more disadvantaged social groups, veered towards distinct marginalization (see also Davies *et al*, 1989; Silva, 2001).

These trends did not prevent middle-class families from making important advances in the process of challenging "producer capture": for example controlling the school agenda by exerting pressure on certain issues; influencing syllabus progress rates and the choice of teaching methodologies; enforcing the putting in place of particular activities and projects; circumventing the rules governing the entrance age of pupils or class changes; exercising the right to choose the teachers (especially the power of veto on teachers considered unsuitable and of "preference" in relation to teachers on the permanent staff).

Furthermore, either through available legal instruments or facility addresses, many middle-class parents were extremely exacting over their choice of school for their children. This choice led to a preference for state schools with features similar to those of private schools: "selected" school population, good academic reputation, wide variety of services on offer (canteen, ATL, special educational programmes).

While these issues are of importance, it must be said that they only represented part of the influence exerted by middle-class families on the selective restructuring of Portuguese primary schools. This influence made itself felt, in a very particular way, in the large number of extra-curricular activities contracted out by parents' associations: information technology, English, music, swimming, dance, martial arts, etc. These activities made up for the shortcomings of the school curriculum, traditionally very deficient in certain areas, while also contributing in a decisive way towards its modernisation (especially in key areas of the "new economy" such as foreign languages or information technology).

This complementary curriculum, for the most part contracted out to companies specializing in services for children, also became an important early factor in the process of blurring the frontiers between the public and private sectors in primary education: the exacting of financial returns for the freeing of premises and "customers"; the contacting out of services; the need for management to be

constantly available to smooth relations with partners and to sort out problems arising from the cohabitation within the school of different entities, companies and services.

The minimalist nature of the support given to primary education (inseparable from the peculiarities of the Welfare State in Southern Europe) also paved the way for private enterprise to penetrate this level of education. Indeed, due to the general dearth of infrastructures in state schools - canteen, supervision, cleaning - many parents' associations contracted companies specializing in the provision of these services. Parents' associations also lent the schools financial support, thus enabling them to be more innovative in their pedagogic practices (study visits, projects) and to acquire most of the materials and equipment necessary to the smooth running of the schools (photocopiers, materials subject to wear and tear). Thus, to a great extent, the parents took charge of a variety of social responsibilities which formally belonged to the Portuguese State.

However, middle-class schools were the only ones that benefited from this state of affairs. Even when there were dynamic parents' associations in deprived areas (Park School), they failed to enlist sufficient support to make the new services viable (e.g. the 'Brinca' project at Park School). Furthermore, the commercial companies did not display the same interest in "rich" and "poor" schools, which meant that offers of services, patronage and financial incentives were unequally distributed.

This phase in the opening up of the school to the community thus turned out, on balance, to be an important element of increased differentiation in Portuguese primary education. This was evident in the sociological composition of the school population, in the importance given to programmes and projects of an innovative curricular nature, in the educational support infrastructures and in the type of extra-curricular activities available to pupils from different social groups. However, not all aspects of the running of primary schools were affected in the same way by the change process. Teachers' pedagogic practices and professional cultures would seem to have been less receptive to pressures for "modernisation" than the management structures, the logistic support

services and the "peripheral" curricular activities (projects and leisure-time occupations).

The sanctioning of school autonomy (1998) will go some way, however, to strengthening the process of destabilization of the bureau-professional cultures that were a feature of this *third edition of the democratic management* of schools. It will also contribute, as we shall now see, towards the institutionalisation of structures, rituals and organisational practices more in line with the prevailing neo-managerialist concepts.

The Early Years of "School Autonomy" in Portugal (1999-2002)

School autonomy has been such a powerful political concept in recent decades that some authors have compared it to the "Promised Land", the land *par excellence* of "milk and honey" which, once attained, will offer a life of peace and plenty for ever and ever (Lima & Afonso, 1995). In the case of the Portuguese education system, reaching the Promised Land meant freedom from the chronic shortage of resources, from the uniformity of the system and from the severe administrative constraints that stifled primary and secondary education. However, the prerequisites for access to the various phases of autonomy in Portugal made it perfectly clear, paradoxically, that the new system brought no slackening of the central regulation of educational activity (see Dias, 1999; Barroso, 1999).

Neo-managerialist and (re)Centralising Pressures: The Role of Central Administration and School Managers in the Process of Change.

The autonomy enjoyed by Portuguese teachers and managers in the final quarter of the twentieth century was, to a great extent, a "private" issue. Indeed, non-compliance with the law, whether deliberate or the result of unfamiliarity with the legislation, rarely went beyond the walls of the school or the confines of the classroom. Such limitations did not, however, prevent the feeling of

autonomy from being a reality for many primary teachers. Critiques of the old management model were therefore restricted to financial matters and to "minor" day-to-day problems ("bureaucracy", delays with repairs, etc). Similar perspectives have, moreover, been recorded in other countries where the bureaucratic school system allowed, paradoxically, considerable room for teacher autonomy (Broadfoot *et al*, 1988; Lauder *et al*, 1999). To distinguish between "locus" and "strength of control" (Broadfoot, 1985) is particularly important to understand the Portuguese educational system before the sanctioning of the new model of "school autonomy": the April Revolution in Portugal weakened the mechanisms of central control (inspection, national exams); schools heads became "teachers among teachers"; regulation among peers was, also, virtually non-existent.

What we see then is that the move towards formal school autonomy was a central state initiative on the basis of a proposal drafted by specialists in School Administration, and was not the result of any important social or pedagogic movement (Afonso, 1998).

Moreover, the approved model, in blatant contrast with its announced objectives, left the schools with little power to decide their own formal organisation. This applied nationwide and to all levels of education (except higher education). Local actors were only given "freedom" to introduce minor changes in the organisational sphere: number of Assembly members, whether the Board was collegiate or run by the Director (Afonso, 1999).

Teachers once again found themselves relegated to the position of implementing policies which had been defined elsewhere. Lack of familiarity with the new language of management, together with the whirlwind nature of the change, were also powerful factors that encouraged people to cling to their dependence on the administration [5]. This being the case, documents required

[5] Schools constantly resorted to the "model" documents provided by the said administration ("school projects", regulations), the support and consultancy services (legal departments, RAAG forum), the current legislation (for defining objectives and the school "mission"), and the prevailing political discourse itself (which inspired a large proportion of the "themes" and "school projects")

for the autonomy process were drawn up in strict compliance with the current legislation and "examples" made available by the Administration (see Derouet, 2000 for a similar report on the French case). The tight scheduling of the process did nothing to alter this mindset or to encourage teachers to espouse the change process [6].

It should be stressed, meanwhile, that during the implementation of the new management model the central administration was not content with its traditional roles (regulation, prescription). It also took on new roles through its regional offices (guidance, counselling, incentive), which were highly valued by the local agents most involved in the process: "Without the Regional Department we should never have managed it. It was they who encouraged us and were always ready to explain things. They were marvellous" (Rita, executive board, Main School; see also Barroso, 2001).

Taken together, these policies initiatives suggest that the Portuguese State, though in the process of changing paradigm (from "educating state" to "regulating state") [7], did not renounce its hyper-prescriptive tradition. The hybrid nature of devolution policies has also been noted in other countries (Arnott & Raab, 2000; Whitty, 2002).

In any case, due to the atypical nature of Portuguese bureaucracy and the way in which the autonomy process was "handled", the early years of the new model of school management did more to increase the formalization and predictability of organisational practices in Portuguese schools, than to disseminate alternative forms of local organisation.

The new model of school management also served to legitimise the reintroduction, in terms of quality and accountability, of political control mechanisms weakened by the Revolution (inspection, national exam system). Portuguese primary teachers were thus forced to abdicate from the main "April conquests" regarding their professional autonomy, even before the autonomy

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[6] The movement towards (re)centralisation was further strengthened through the publication of additional legislation that tightly regulated the new organisational dynamics (i.e, conditions for the accumulation of responsibilities and the granting of reductions in contact hours)

[7] new processes of internal and external evaluation were institutionalised at the same period (inspection, national examinations, activities reports).

contracts had begun to be defined. This loss of autonomy was further exacerbated by the change in relations within the schools themselves, especially by the transformation of school executives from "teachers among teachers" to "middle managers". Indeed, if Portuguese primary teachers remained largely on the fringes of the change in school management, the same cannot be said for school executives, who played a pivotal role in the process.

The support of school executives for the new management model can be assessed in different ways: by the high percentage of heads who applied for the new management posts, by the way in which they influenced the composition of the school assemblies and pedagogic boards (especially the choice of presidents, which was largely the result of personal and ideological co-option), by the systematic putting down of any resistance to the new model, and by the pivotal role they played in the cultural legitimisation of neo-managerial perspectives [8].

It should, however, be made clear that, contrary to what the neo-managerial concepts would have us believe, the role played by school executives in the change process can hardly be attributed to the prompting of a specific personal or organisational "vision". Indeed, the professional and organisational perspectives of the managers taking part in this study revealed ways of thinking and acting redolent of prevailing neo-managerial concepts. We are therefore a long way from the traditional charismatic leaderships (Weber, 1949; Smyth *et al*, 1989) and even further from genuine democratic leadership [9] (Blase & Anderson, 1995; Apple, 2002).

In fact, this study would suggest that there is a gradual transformation of Portuguese school executives into "middle managers", with clear standards of

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[8] Indeed, they resisted for months on end their colleagues' attempts to restore the old order, suffered humiliation and the loss of their peers' respect (Main School and Gama School) and were on occasions forced to renounce the new posts for lack of internal support (as was the case with Pessoa School, Santa Maria and even Gama School, after the period of observation.) Despite all this, they continued, with steadfast conviction, to stand up for the new government orientations.

[9] These leadership "styles" are characterised not by the reproduction of existing power relations as is the case in point, but by the capacity for empowerment and social transformation

loyalty to the central administration and with action strategies that, on occasion, evoke the concept of "bastard leadership" [10].

The long tradition of political dependence in Portuguese primary education may go some way towards explaining why Portuguese school managers act mainly as internal representatives of the "State" ("middle managers"), rather than leaders of a local school community. Besides this, as has already been pointed out by various authors, school executives are progressively cut off from the pedagogic universe itself:

> I now feel like one of those people I used to criticize - those people who sit in offices, who know nothing about what is going on in the classrooms, but who are always telling teachers what to do and what not to do. Now I'm only in touch with pedagogic issues through training sessions or problems I have to deal with as and when they come up (Rita, president executive board, Main school).

It should also be remembered that school managers, in primary education, are among the main beneficiaries as well as agents of the transition to the new model (the benefits were noticeable under the headings of political legitimisation, exemption from contact hours, salary, social status and administrative support).

For all these reasons, Portuguese school managers have, as a result of a process which began over a decade ago, been increasingly distanced from their former colleagues (ideologically, socially, operationally and strategically). They have ceased to be "teachers among teachers". Rather, they have begun to exert considerable pressure to involve the teachers in their *own* concerns and pressures. The concept of the "good teacher", in particular, now depends on the degree of organisational involvement (measured by participation in non-teaching activities), on commitment to the "good image" of the school and on the entrepreneurialism shown (securing of funds, partners, programmes).

This concept of the "good teacher", which began to take shape during the previous analytical phase, constitutes, as we shall now see, only one facet of the

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[10] a concept developed by Nigel Wright

professional and organisational restructuring process that followed in the wake of the new managerial concepts.

Neo-Fordism in Primary School: The Emergence of New Patterns of Work, Power and Identity

"Collaboration under Constraint"

Neo-Fordist regimes make for working environments which differ considerably from traditional forms of organisation: smaller, more manageable units within the whole; extended duties and responsibilities; new mechanisms of control and "quality" assurance; imperative nature of identity and organisational involvement; (see Brown & Lauder, 1997; Menter *et al*, 1997; Woods & Jeffrey, 2001). Professional identity becomes "at once more constrained (in terms of support and opportunities) and more extended in terms of responsibilities" (Menter *at al*, 1997, 10).

The influence of the new forms of labour organisation in the restructuring of Portuguese primary schools could be seen in the following: development of several forms of middle and cross-section management; constitution of "year departments" and flexible project teams ("the smaller units"); new forms of work control (minutes of meetings, lesson-plan files, work-rules to be observed by the various bodies); new mechanisms for evaluating the quality of the work (standardised tests, surveys, activity reports); contracting out of the relations with school partners; "strategic planning" (school project, curricular project, year project, classroom projects) [11].

These elements also indicate that the implementation of the new SBM model clearly contributed to the development of new patterns of professional relations among primary teachers. This process was, however, far from being smooth and straightforward. In some cases teachers managed to take advantage of the new managerial conditions to promote something akin to traditional processes

[11] the schools varied slightly in the type of practices adopted

of co-operation (mutual support, exchange, emergent forms of "joint action"). There were also situations, though very few and far between, in which forms of collegiality were used as a defensive measure, to divert pressure from upper middle class families (as in the case of Main School).

On the other hand, in all schools concessions were made which brought relations between Portuguese primary teachers more in line with the paradigms of "collaboration under constraint" that have been associated with neo-managerial reforms (see Woods *et al*, 1997; Smyth *et al*, 2000). Indeed, on the pretext of inspection, legislation, or the (good) "organisation of the school", less formal styles of collaboration were criticised and replaced by structures and practices with a higher potential for institutional control and "contrived collegiality" (regular meetings; minutes; year projects; group lesson-planning; reports).

In these circumstances, it comes as no surprise that teachers' reactions to the new forms of collegiality were, for the most part, ambivalent.

Expressions of satisfaction with the new conditions for "exchange" between colleagues were mingled with criticism of the formal, compulsory nature of these same conditions (fixed times for meetings, minutes, reports) and of the fact that many decisions came ready-made from above, leaving no room for any real dialogue and no choice but to comply with what had been stipulated. Although the overall reaction was positive, as in other countries (Osborn *et al*, 2000), there were, nevertheless, situations in which criticism outweighed acceptance of the new *modus operandi:*

- in schools with strong political tensions and leadership styles considered to be authoritarian (Gama School);
- in cases where there was not enough convergence of pedagogic and administrative perspectives (some year co-ordinations and work groups in almost all the schools);
- when professional collaboration was hampered by material constraints (for example, the existence of different textbooks in the Santa Maria Consortium; lack of financial support for school projects).

In these circumstances it becomes clear that this study corroborates the theses of Woods *et al* (1997), concerning collegiate practices in primary education:

> While primary teachers may welcome a workplace culture of collaboration if the range and quality of the collaboration and collegiality are considered appropriate, they will see it as contrived collegiality if it appears to involve intensification, overload, ineffectiveness, limited choice, inappropriate democratic procedures, the domination of an informal discourse and extended institutionalisation (p47).

Teachers' Professional Identities and School Hierarchies

The research revealed that primary teachers were not indifferent to the new professional perspectives that went with the definition of the new management model. Although still a long way from the transition from a "service ethic" to a "market ethic", there is no doubt that most teachers were aware of the dilemmas, and in many cases the tensions and constraints, produced by the clash between the old obligations and the new (children's needs and moral accountability versus organisation and client demands). Adaptation to the new work conditions seems to have been more a process of accumulating and incorporating obligations and loyalties (making time for projects, giving consideration to the preferences and pressures of parents, taking part in non-teaching activities) than of an in-depth redefinition of professional identity.

There are, however, factors which may intensify this process of redefinition of identity. Indeed, new social hierarchies are emerging in Portuguese primary schools which are not entirely unconnected with the degree of compliance, espousal and success observed in the acquittal of the new management duties. Traditional hierarchies, established on the basis of professional status and length of service in the school and in the profession, have begun to lose ground to the demands of the "new professionalism" imposed by the new organisational directives and attendant political discourse. This discourse has also enabled school managers to eradicate the influence of the more antagonistic teachers and to use political co-option in the "conferring" of

middle-management responsibilities (as well as in the actual make-up of the school's managerial bodies). The traditional divisions that existed between contract and permanent teachers no longer make sense in a universe increasingly typified by the performance of organisational duties[12] and by demonstrations of a spirit of initiative.

Moreover, even outside primary schools, professional career perspectives are ever more tightly dependent on the new management concepts and functions. The number of duties performed and projects co-ordinated are, for instance, crucial factors in applications for certain courses (specialisation or MA). On the other hand, quality of teaching is of little relevance in these processes. Thus, dedication to the children and the classroom brings few social advantages. Indeed, it is the courses mentioned above that make for career advancement and widen the network of relations and of professional opportunities open to primary teachers.

SBM and Parental Participation in Schools

The dominant literature implies a socially undifferentiated voice on parental involvement in schools (Hanafin & Lynch, 2002). However, this study confirms the thesis of those authors who have emphasised how current social and economic conditions underpin a re-worked but also re-emphasised agenda of class differentiation in education (Whitty *et al*, 1998; Lauder *et al, 1999;* Gewirtz, 2001; *Reay, 2001;* Silva, 2001; Ball, 2003). The research also clearly suggests that, at least in Portuguese primary schools, different kinds of parents have very different voices. These differences manifested themselves in a variety of ways. In this conclusion I will discuss two of the main problems:

- the existence of deep social divides in the institutional participation of parents, as laid down in the new management model (Chapter 5);
- the powerful influence exerted by upper middle class families on Portuguese primary schools and on the administrative structure itself.

[12] Presidency of managerial bodies, advisory services, project co-ordination, year co-ordinations

With regard to institutional participation, emphasis must be given, in the first place, to the priority given to parental participation in those areas which lend themselves to a certain degree of "producer capture" (school assembly, board of studies, parent-teacher meetings) as opposed to participation in organs in which there is tighter hierarchical and cultural control on the part of the State: executive committees, regional education offices, educational area centres (see also Silva, 2001). The very institutionalisation of SBM models, by generating institutional isolation, has been seen as a means whereby the State can obstruct the voicing of certain actors' interests: teachers and teachers' unions, the interests of socially disadvantaged families (see Whitty, 1996; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Stoer & Cortesão, 1999; Smyth, 2000).

Secondly, by favouring forms of institutional participation in which socially deprived families feel uncertain of themselves (Dias, 1985; Davies *et al*, 1989), the assumption that these families take little interest in their children's education is reinforced. This is reflected in the difficulties attendant on the formation of parents' associations in schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils; the lack of nomination of representatives or their high rate of absenteeism (in the Santa Maria consortium). If this was taken at face value we would, once again, be guilty of "blaming the victim" (Davies *et al*, 1989) for a situation in which the school performs a role of "covert regulation" by privileging models of parental participation typical of the middle classes (Donzelet, 1986; Silva, 2001).

It should also be stressed that the institutionalisation of parental participation, as shown by this study, can also play other roles in the "segregation" of socially disadvantaged families. Indeed, the political co-opting of the more "organised and interested parents" as representatives of socially disadvantaged groups[13] only helps to disguise the issue of the cultural diversity of families. Moreover, the flimsy structure of parental participation in these schools may also contribute to the cultural assimilation of certain families and to a definition of parent roles in accordance with established interests: fund-raising, pressure on

[13] Gama School, executive board

the local authorities to carry out repairs and construction work, checking up on the school support services (canteen, LTA). Other more difficult issues are systematically neglected.

To admit the existence of forms of cultural assimilation does not mean, contrary to what certain contemporary political proposals presuppose, that working class families easily slip into the role of "professional parent" which characterises certain strata of the modern middle classes[14]. Indeed, it is the cultural capital of these social strata that, to a great extent, enables them "to 'decode' school systems and organisations, to discriminate between schools in terms of policies and practices, to engage with and question (and challenge if necessary) teachers and school managers, to critically evaluate teachers' responses and collect, scan and interpret various sources of information" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p25).

It is clear that the new SBM model has not significantly changed the pattern of school/family relations existing in schools catering to predominantly disadvantaged social groups (see Chapter 5). On the other hand, the parents of pupils at Main School anticipated aspects of the reform in school governance to exhibit many of the features of the "professional parent" model already being sanctioned in many developed countries (see Gewirtz, 1999, Vincent, 2001; Van Zanten, 2002). They operated as "active consumers in the market place", they adopted a "policing role, keeping a close eye on what the school was doing and taking action when needed" and they "acted as home educators", supporting children in learning and school activities (Gewirtz, 2001, p381).

In addition, they displayed a remarkable ability to exploit the school system to the best advantage of their children (Gewirtz, 2001). Indeed, the "achievements" of "parent power" over a ten-year period are striking: the construction of a new school and Kindergarten; a full programme of leisure-time activities; school support services (canteen, cleaning, security); improvements to the school's infrastructures (painting, modernisation of the toilet amenities, gardening, a

covered play area); prompt substitution of teachers (in cases of absence, late appointment or "unsuitability"); a strong academic curriculum with some curricular innovations and the "right" of preference concerning certain members of the staff (permanent teachers).

Above all, these parents succeeded in making "sociological and psychological paradises" of the schools or classes attended by their offspring (only a minimum number of deprived, disruptive and special needs children gained access to these schools).

The existence of "parents that get what they want" (Birenbaum - Carmeli, 1999) from state education has also been noted in other countries:

> As for primary schools, a recent sociological study conducted in the affluent districts of Paris shows that, when these parents do not choose the private sector either for convenience or for ideological reasons, they act in such a way as to "privatise" the public schools where they are both numerically and socially in a dominant position: they use their political and social relations to better physical facilities, obtain educational materials of the highest quality and increase the number of outside activities (Van Zanten, 1996, p69).

The publication of the new management model (1998) gave fresh impetus to the process of (selective) "privatisation" of Portuguese primary schools. In fact, the differentiation between schools that during the third edition of democratic management was largely limited to management and extra-curricular activities today significantly affects the very organisational and pedagogic processes of the schools (see Chapters 5 & 6). Indeed, the penetration of neo-managerialist concepts and neo-Fordist-inspired forms of labour organisation are more significant in middle class schools (Main and Pessoa Schools) than those attended by working class or deprived children (Magalhães and Gama Schools). In some cases, upper middle class pressure and influence was so strong that the process went far beyond the provisions of the legislation: total reorganisation of the school premises at Main School ("small units"); redefinition of parents' and

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[14] nor that directives for this of "cultural assimilation" are politically appropriate in pluralist and democratic societies

executives' functions, through delegation or contracting out of minor management duties, to concentrate on "political tasks" (school priorities, evaluation of services); increasing formalisation and "surveillance" of relations with social partners (the renewal of "contracts" became subject to annual evaluation); strategic control of the local circuits of schooling (parents); pressure for common goals between the different services and organisations operating in the schools (Kindergarten, LTA, support services); strong advocacy of new forms of work organisation (projects, teams).

The periods under analysis correspond to processes of approximation, both on the formal level and the level of practices, to the neo-managerialist education policies that have emerged in a number of countries in recent decades. In the first phase of this study, the approximation of these policies was felt mainly in peripheral educational functions (such as school administration, support services and LTA); but the impact of the new regime of school autonomy (1998) led to an important organisational, cultural and political transformation of Portuguese primary schools. Moreover, in both phases, transformations effected in some schools went far beyond the legal requirements, suggesting that we are confronted with processes of societal convergence, albeit of a non-linear kind, which transcend the specific political directives of the different countries. It is not only "sign policies" that move between frontiers (see Chapter 1). Further research is necessary, however, particularly of a comparative nature, to determine the specificity of the various national and geo-strategic matrices.
This study suggests that the Portuguese model of convergence with neo-liberal and neo-managerial policies has certain distinct peculiarities: the erratic way in which the process has been conducted (constantly being halted and restarted); the strong "discretionary power" still held by the central administration; the radical (and rapid) change in head teachers' roles; the vulnerability of state structures (local, regional and central) to upper middle class pressure and influence; the weakness of the democratic and inclusive tradition in Portuguese public education and Welfare.

We should not forget, however, that there is a world of difference between emphasing the local, the contingent and ignoring any structural relationship among practices (Apple, 1996).

In a similar way, it is one thing is to recognize the specific attributes of each particular country and quite another to negate the existence of influences and constraints operating on a transnational scale (economic, political and cultural).

> Educational reform tends to be seen in terms of getting educational aims and objectives right - ignoring the wider political dimensions of change. Focusing on the mechanics of school management means that system - wide issues, let alone the international dimensions of educational restructuring, are often lost from view (Whitty *et al*, 1998, p5).

Thus, this thesis attempts to avoid overestimating the degree of policy convergence in education while also seeking to avoid any underestimation.

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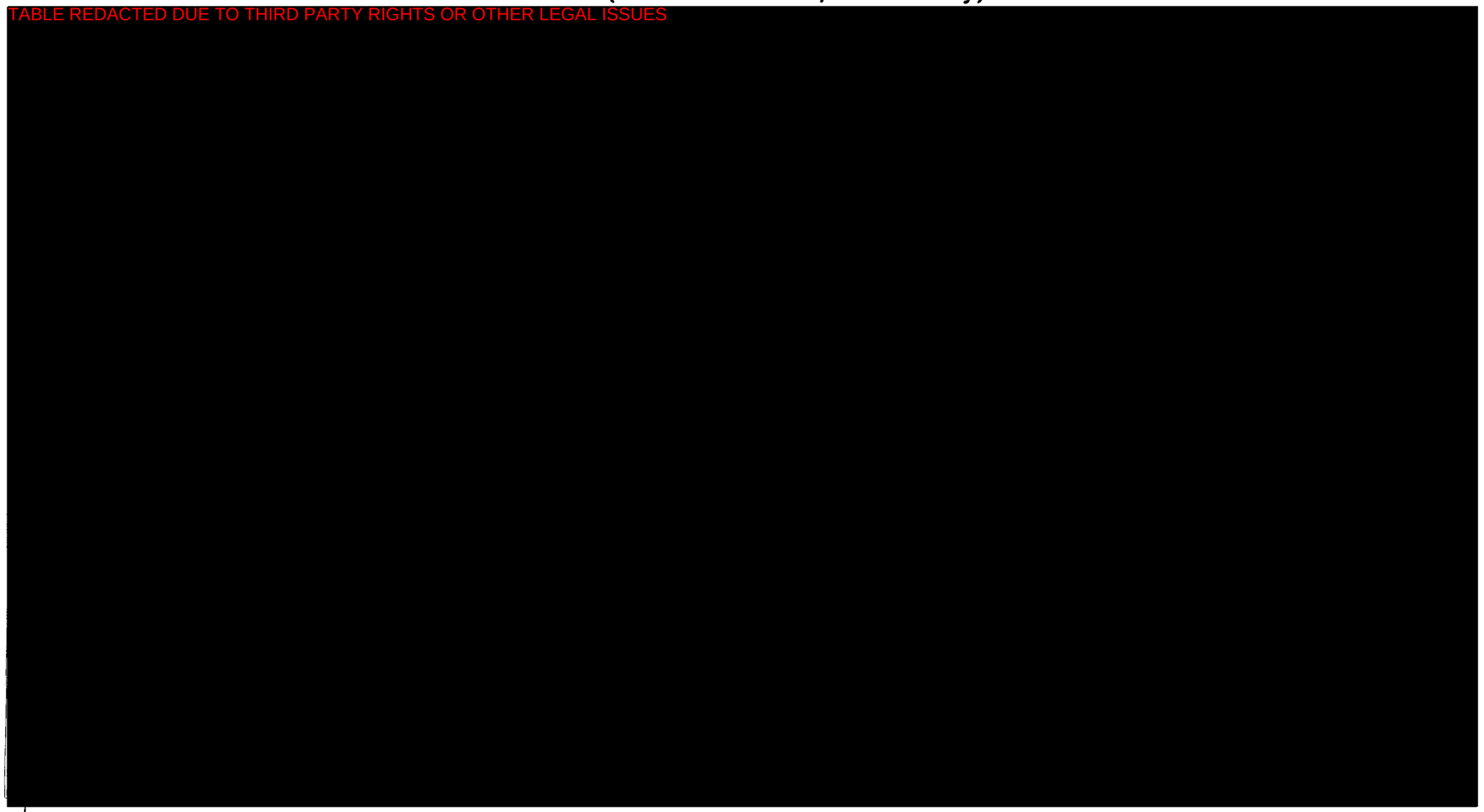
APPENDIX

RESPONSABILITIES OF THE ORGANS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
(Decree-Law 115-A/98 of 4th May)

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Educational Policies and School Management in Portugal: Processes of Conservative Modernisation (1998-2002)

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ABSTRACT

The educational agenda of recent decades has been characterised by ongoing attempts to "restructure" and "deregulate" state schooling. This process has, however, been highly controversial, with major divergences of interpretation in almost all the aspects pertaining to the reform in school governance: its goals, principles, foundations, outcomes and "effective" level of internationalisation.

The current research aims to contribute towards a clarification of certain aspects of this debate and, in particular, of issues relating to:

- The impact of reform on organisational structures and practices.
- The influence of neo-managerial perspectives in societies, which differ considerably from the more developed countries. Indeed, Portugal has been defined as a semi -peripheral country, with very specific approaches to the development of the Welfare State and mass schooling.

The investigation describes and analyses the organisational, professional, social, cultural and political transformations taking place in Portuguese primary schools during the period 1998-2002. This period corresponds to that of the defining and implementing of a new system of "school autonomy, administration and management" (Law nº115-A/1998), which establishes extremely diverse areas of potential autonomy for schools (in the strategic, curricular, organisational, pedagogic, financial and cultural domains) and extends the possibility of participation of parents in school governance.

The study, which draws on ethnographic methods , took place in six primary schools in the Lisbon area. The fieldwork was conducted in two main phases: the period prior (1998-1999) and subsequent to the implementation of the new model of school management (1999-2002).

The analysis took into consideration the main issues and controversies to which the reform in school governance has given raise in contemporary literature: emergence of new models for social regulation (market, neo-managerialism, performativity); changes in professional and organisational patterns (collegiality, school culture, leadership); new relations between the school and the community (consumer power, "privatisation")

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

List of Figures

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INTRODUCTION

Research Goals

The study **"Educational Policies and School Management in Portugal: Processes of Conservative Modernisation (1998-2002)"** has two main goals.
In the first place it aims to describe and analyse the main policies and practices that have shaped the governance and management of Portuguese primary education in recent decades. It attempts, in a very particular way, to identify the organisational, professional, social, cultural and political transformations experienced in Portuguese primary schools during the period 1998-2002. This period corresponds to that of the defining and implementing of a new system of "school autonomy, administration and management" (Dec- Law nº115-A/1998), which establishes extremely diverse areas of potential autonomy for schools (in the strategic, curricular, organisational, pedagogic, financial and cultural domains) and extends the possibility of participation of parents in school governance.
The institutionalisation of this system heralds a change in the bureaucratic and centralist structure of Portuguese school administration and suggests the existence of a "paradigmatic convergence" in relation to the devolution policies that, since the mid-eighties, have dominated the educational agenda of many western countries and international organisations (OCDE, World Bank). The analysis will therefore take into consideration the main issues and controversies which the reform in school governance has raised in recent decades: emergence of new models for social regulation (market, neo-managerialism, performativity); changes in professional and organisational patterns ("new professionalism" , school culture), "transformational" leadership); new relations between the school and the community (consumer power, contracting out and

privatisation of services); globalisation, "globalisation" or "localisation" of educational policies.

Secondly, although on a different scale of priorities, the research attempts to help put an end to the oblivion to which Southern European countries, especially those with a more recent democratic tradition (Portugal, Greece, Spain), have been consigned in the field of school administration. Indeed, present trends in the sphere of school management emerged from a set of political orientations that were most forcefully expressed in the developed, English-speaking countries: neo-managerialism, marketisation of education, new systems of accountability (Apple 1986; Slee *et al*, 1998; Broadfoot, 2000; Smyth et al 2000; Gewirtz, 2002). However, the reform of school governance now constitutes a world trend (Karlsteng, 1997; Lima, 2001; Arnott & Raab 2000). For this reason, there needs to be a diversification of research contexts. Only in this way can an evaluation be made of the degree to which state education systems have converged in recent years. As we shall see, the Southern European countries, especially Portugal, constitute a particularly suitable backdrop against which to plot the new "geography" of similarity (ies) and difference(s) in the sphere of educational governance and regulation.

Context and Relevance of the Study

Internationally, the governance and management of state schools underwent important changes in the 1980s and 1990 (Arnott & Raab, 2000). This reform process, currently referred to as "decentralisation", "devolution" or "School Based Management (SBM)", has been viewed by international agencies and diverse national governments as an essential prerequisite for greater organisational effectiveness and improvement in standards of education (see Chapter 1). However, the centrality of this issue, in contemporary educational policies, does not prevent devolution from continuing to be an extremely controversial issue, with major divergences in almost all respects concerning the reform in school governance: its goals, principles, foundations, outcomes

and level of internationalisation (see Chapter 1). Indeed, the new models of school management are highly prescriptive and normative, over-compensating in political rhetoric ("open society", "free market", "consumer sovereignty", "knowledge-based societies") for what they lack in theoretical and empirical foundation.

The very arguments used to legitimise the "devolution" process, as shown by Weiler (1999) in respect of the *distribution of the authority, efficacy and culture of learning,* are wide open to formal contradiction: a broader and more diffuse division of authority almost always multiplies levels and sources of control; efficacy depends on the relation established between loss of "scale economies" and "improvements" achieved in the use of resources; (local) learning cultures are hampered by the existence of a global market that demands relatively uniform competence, skills and qualifications (see also Chapter 1).

Furthermore, the futuristic scenarios designed by neo-managerial concepts are somewhat overdrawn and unconvincing. They remind us of Green's critique to some versions of gobalisation: "it can sometimes be strikingly parochial (first-worldist), naïvely historical and crudely reductionist (Green, 1999, p55).

It therefore becomes imperative to carry out studies that look outside the new legislative directives and the rationale behind them; studies which, while not ignoring changes in the nature of high modernity societies (Giddens, 1997), throw light upon the way in which educational policies are appropriated or recontextualised by local actors (teachers, parents, school managers, local and central administration). The current research therefore focuses on an analysis of the impact of school based management on organisational structures and practices, that is, the identification of the "first order" effects of the reforms (Ball, 1994, p25; see also Chapter 2). Attention to the praxiological dimension is particularly important in semi-peripheral countries [1] , of which Portugal is one, given their marked divisions between political orientations and social relations and practices (Santos, 1990).

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[1] See definition in pp51-52

> The discrepancy between legal frameworks and social practices is universal, and only becomes a salient feature when it reaches a particularly high level, as is the case nowadays in Portugal (Santos, 1990).

It is not, however, solely in its research into the "context of practice" that this study can contribute to the critical analysis of the normative and universalist claims upheld by the neo-managerial concepts.

Portugal also has various structural features that in them pose a challenge to the way in which the issue of devolution has been presented and legitimised by the prevailing managerial concepts. Firstly, being a semi-peripheral country Portugal constitutes a context in which it is virtually impossible to circumvent the centrality of the State. The latter plays a central role in regulating the economy and arbitrating social conflicts unparalleled in the developed countries (see chapter one , section four). It is therefore difficult to see how the Portuguese State can transfer, as required by neo-managerialist concepts, a major part of its functions to a "civil society" and a "private initiative" that draw so heavily on the support of that same State (Estevão, 1995).

Secondly, in spite of the Portuguese educational system being characterised by a tradition of educational centralisation which goes back more than two centuries, this centralisation has failed to produce typical bureaucratic patterns: there is a marked discrepancy between formal dispositions and practice (Fernandes, 1995; Lima, 1998, 2001). In this respect, bureaucracy cannot be said to constitute a major impediment to innovation. Further, the hypercritical position adopted by neo-liberal and neo-managerialist perspectives towards the role of the state and state bureaucracy in economic development would seem to be unsuited to semi-peripheral societies and developing countries. In fact, in terms of the theory of dependence, what has frequently been stressed is the role of the "state bourgeoisie", in league with local and international elites, in the growth dynamics of semi-peripheral countries (Evans, 1986; Santos *et al*, 2001).

Third, Portugal shares the special tradition of "welfare state" that characterises Southern European countries (e.g. clientism, misappropriation of funds allocated for social security, liaison between public and private entities in the field of social assistance) [2] . Portugal would indeed seem to be a particularly glaring example when it comes to the absence of effective state commitment to safeguarding the social and economic rights of its citizens. Some authors have expressed the view, both for this reason and by the very nature of the development of social security structures, that one cannot truly speak of a Welfare State in Portugal (Santos *et al,* 2001). It would therefore seem particularly relevant to investigate the repercussions in this kind of context of phenomena such as the "crisis of the State ", the "crises of Welfare state", the "limitations of bureaucratic models" " the empowerment" of local actors", all of which have been thoroughly discussed in the specialist literature.

Indeed, current directives in the educational sphere, akin to what had already been taking place in the Portuguese health system, would seem to suggest the existence of post-welfarism without welfare (or at least with extremely limited forms of welfare). It therefore seems relevant to attempt to look for explanations for educational restructuring, including the restructuring of school management and governance, that transcend the schematic criticism of bureau-professionalism and welfarism that characterize new managerial discourses (see Chapter 1). Of particular value in this domain were studies referring to the issue of the crisis in the "legitimisation of the State"; to the emergence of new models of educational regulation; to the change in patterns of production and consumption and, in a general sense, to the issue of "conservative modernization" [3] (Dale, 1990; Popkewitz, 1991, 1999; Gewirtz *et al, 1995;* Menter *et al,* 1997; Whitty *et al,* 1998; Heiler, 1999; Sarmento *et al,* 1999; Smyth, 1999; Gewirtz, 2000, 2002).

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[2] see Ferrara, 1995

[3] freing individuals for economic purposes while controlling them for social purposes (Dale, 1990).

The Research Process: Structure and Strategies of Inquiry

Methodological options, as Bourdieu pointed out, "are inseparable from the most theoretical options for object definition" (Bourdieu, 1989, p29). Since it would be virtually impossible to describe Portuguese primary schools, on a social, cultural and political basis, without having recourse to observation "of the everyday routines that make organisational life" (Schwartzman, 1993, p38), this research draws on ethnographic methods ,techniques and procedures .

Field work was carried out in six primary schools of the Lisbon area, of different size, location and social composition of population. The duration of the empirical research was approximately three years, and fell mainly within the period between January 1999 and March 2002 (see Methodology).

The research process included two main phases. In the first part of the research, prior to the implementation of the new management model, I was mainly concerned with achieving two objectives. First, I was anxious to gather data that would subsequently enable me to assess the process of transformation associated with the transition from "*democratic management*" to "*school autonomy*" (the designations for the old and the new management model in Portugal; see Chapter 1). My second aim was to analyse the organisational and professional implications of the political about-turn in Portugal in the late eighties, in terms of a certain "debureaucratisation" and "decentralisation" of the education system.

In the second phase of the research, I tried to identify the transformations taking place in Portuguese primary schools, on the cultural, organisational, pedagogic and political levels, as a result of a more entrenched orientation towards the predominant managerial paradigms, which expressed itself in the adoption of a new regime of "autonomy, administration and management of Portuguese schools" (Decree-Law N° 115-A/98).

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation has three main parts (see Table 1). The first part is dedicated to the theoretical and historical foundation of the study. The second part is based upon the research findings obtained during the first phase of field work and reform and corresponding to the period prior to the new management model but in which certain moderate forms of neo-managerialism could already be detected (see Chapter 1). The third part of the dissertation is devoted to a description and analysis of the transformations taking place in Portuguese primary schools, in the political, organisational and cultural domains, as a result of the implementation of the new regime of school autonomy (decree-Law nº 115-A/98).

Table 1 - Structure of dissertation

PART I

THE RESEARCH PROCESS:
THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CO-ORDINATES

CHAPTER ONE
SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW

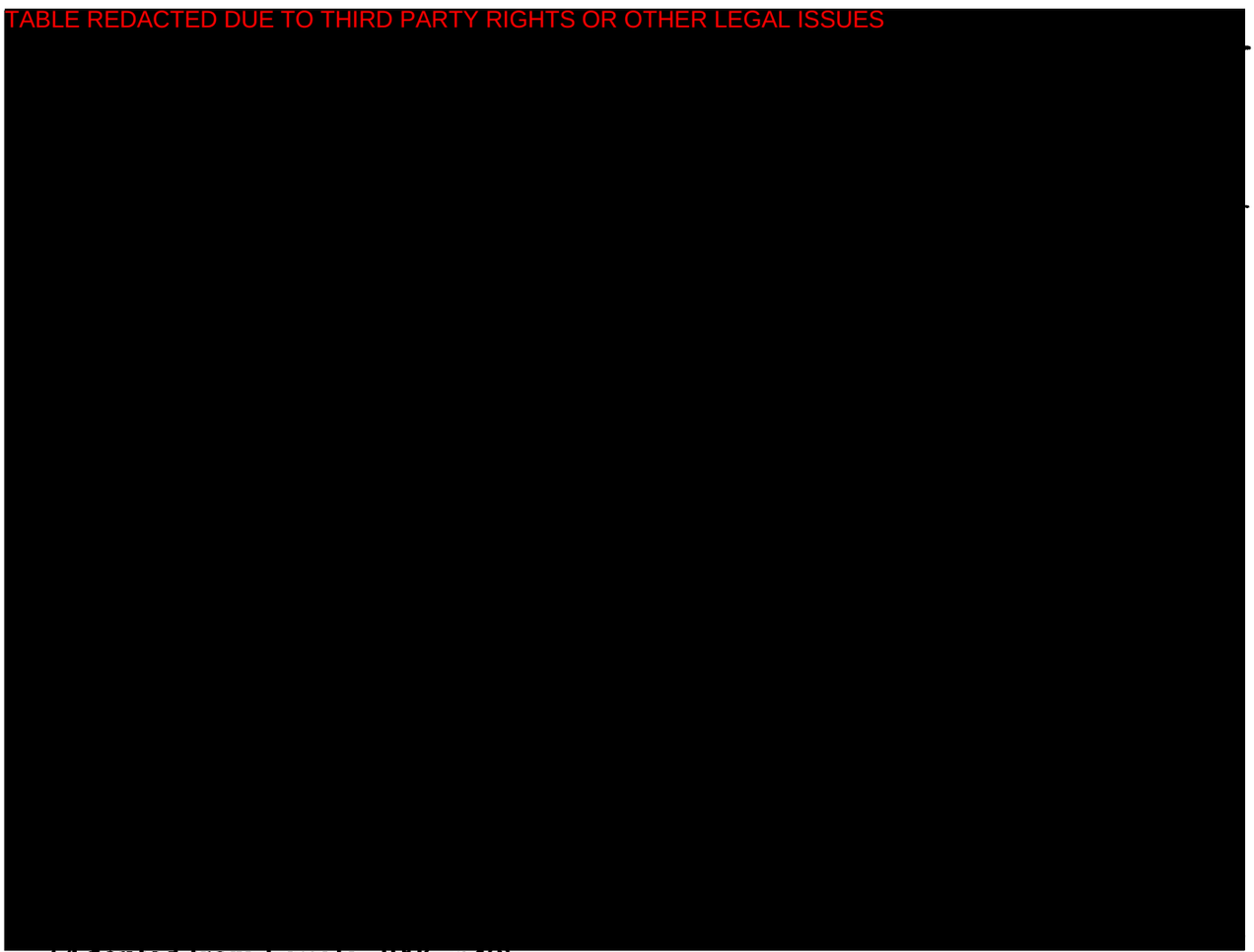
The reform of school administration and governance is one of the most important aspects of contemporary educational policies. In this chapter I intend to contribute towards the analysis of this phenomenon, which has wide-ranging implications for the political and cultural restructuring of schools. This analysis will consist of four main parts. Firstly , I shall attempt to define the concept of "school based management" (SBM), which constitutes the cornerstone of the present research. Secondly, I shall turn to an analysis of the "policy context" within which new forms of educational regulation have emerged in many parts of the world. Thirdly, I shall attempt to summarise the main principles of SBM and the various critiques to which it has been subject. Finally, there will be a description of the Portuguese position in the domain of school administration, in an attempt to identify areas of continuity and discontinuity in relation to the scenarios previously analysed.

School Based Management: a Definition

The administration and management of schools has, as has already been said, been the target of a thoroughgoing process of restructuring. This process, in particular evidence in English-speaking countries, has been variously designated: school-based management (SBM), devolution, school autonomy, delegation, deregulation, parental choice, local management of schools.
This proliferation of designations arises not only from the wide variety of contexts in which changes in school governance have taken place, but also gives some indication of the complexity of the phenomena in question. In fact, the

term "decentralization" has been applied to profoundly contradictory political perspectives: liberalism, federalism, local populism and participatory democracy (Lauglo, 1996). It may therefore serve to disguise widely differentiated models of policy-making and educational regulation (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Implications of Different Forms of Decentralisation



(Adapted from Lauglo, 1996, p40)

In addition, the widespread use of the term "decentralisation" to describe the current process of reform of school management obscures the fact that this also includes:

- movements for concentration of decision -making (supranational bodies, central definition of goals, standardized testing)
- an important redefinition of power relations between local actors (parents, teachers and local authorities)

- new forms of state discipline and surveillance (business and performance oriented culture, audit systems).

In these circumstances, it is a misconception to see the reforms of school management and governance as simply a strategy for de-regulation (Ball, 2001) They are new processes of control, "controlled de -control" (Du Gay, 1996), that operate according to the combined dictates of the market, managerialism and performitivity (Ball, 1999;2001).

Even the more clear-cut designations, apparently easier to circumscribe and specify, are in fact clearly multifaceted. Kenway & Epstein (1996) showed, for example, how the term "choice" can be used to encompass a combination of different types of process:

> *devolution* (passing management responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, "down the line"), *deregulation* (getting rid of lot of the "restrictive" rules), *dezoning* (pupils are "free" to move between schools) and *desegregation* (replacing collectivity, collegiality, co-operation with competitive individualism) (Kenway & Epstein, 1996, p301).

Similar concerns could be raised with respect to the use of other concepts (c.f. Whitty *et al*, 1998). The use of the term "school autonomy", for example, which constitutes the main political and academic reference in Portugal for the reform of school administration, carries with it such a strong connotation of self-government that is far from corresponding to the dominant educational policies of the eighties and nineties:

> A self-managing school is not an autonomous school (...) it is not intended that authority be decentralised for its own sake (...) The attachment of responsibility and accountability to the concept implies that this authority is concerned with determining the particular ways in which the school goes about its affairs in addressing the goals, policies, the standards and accountabilities that have been *centrally determined for all schools* (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998, p5, my emphasis).

That is why, whenever I use this expression with reference to the Portuguese situation, it will be according to Whitty's definition.

> School autonomy, as used here, refers to school self - management through some or all aspects of funding and decision-making being devolved (...) to individual schools whether to site -based professionals, community-based councils or a particular combination of these (Whitty, 2002, p47).

The complexity of the issues under discussion makes it extremely hard to find a designation that is free of ambiguity and limitations (see also Kenway & Epstein, 1996; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Sarmento, 1999). Moreover, the systematic use of different terminology, while theoretically more appropriate, raises considerable problems of a practical nature with regard to the drafting and understanding of this dissertation. Therefore, except where it might jeopardize the analytical process, the expression "school based management" (SMB) will be used when referring to the restructuring of school management under way in various countries. The choice of designation was made with two essential factors in mind:

- SBM is one of the expressions most widely used internationally to designate the phenomenon under analysis (Levacic, 1995; Whitty *et al*, 1998);
- The characteristics of school administration in Portugal, which are typified by a delicate balance between the centralist tradition and some experience of management at school level [1].

Bearing in mind that even the designation "school based management" is not entirely free of ambiguity (Whitty, 1998), it should be explained that in this research it refers to three aspects of policy which are interconnected but which may assume different degrees of relevance:

- transference of responsibilities to schools, which may include a variety of different kinds of resources (e.g. financial, curricular, human);
- existence of a centrally defined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998);

[1] see the last section of this chapter

- institutionalisation of mechanisms for local participation in the running of schools (including the wielding of influence as, for example, in the choice of school).

By considering these three aspects simultaneously, we can distinguish SBM from the other types of school management with which it is frequently associated: educational decentralization and school self -government.

This definition also makes it clear that SBM is a form of school management based on an autonomy that is merely *relative.* It is an administrative rather than political process, with decisions at school level being made within a framework of local, state or national policies and guidelines. Indeed, this is the view unequivocally adopted by SBM supporters:

> School site or school based management (...) are all approaches to the management of public schools or systemic private schools wherein there is a significant and consistent decentralisation to the school level of authority to make decisions related with the allocation of resources, (...). *The school remains accountable to a central authority for the manner resources are allocated* (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, p303, emphasis added).

Indeed, despite the change in power relations taking place at local level (Gewirtz, 2002; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002), SBM presupposes the perpetuation of a considerable asymmetry in power and authority among the various levels of the administrative hierarchy. This hierarchical difference remains, even when school-based management models go beyond a narrow focus of finance to embrace greater institutional control over an appreciable share of the potential educational resources.

> [Resources] include: knowledge (decentralisation of decisions related to curriculum, including decisions related to the goals or ends of schooling); technology (decentralisation of decisions related to the means of teaching and learning); power (decentralisation of authority to make decisions); material (decentralisation of decisions related to the use of facilities, supplies and equipment); people (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of people in matters related with teaching and learning); time (decentralisation of decisions related to the allocation of

time); and finance (decentralisation of decisions relating to the allocation of money) (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992).

Having clarified the main designation used in this research, it is now time to analyse the origins of SBM.

The Background to the Emergence of SBM

A considerable amount of contemporary sociological and organisational literature tends to justify the emergence of SBM with arguments of a technical, technological or scientific nature: modernisation and flexibilization of school structures; rational and systematic planning; precision and efficiency in the decision-making process (information, speed, participation); proximity to the entrepreneurial style of management model (initiative, efficiency, leadership, innovation). These arguments, however convincing they may appear, are far from constituting an adequate interpretation of the factors underlying the restructuring of school administration. They tend to present SBM as an essentially technical issue, whereas what lies at the root of the redefinition of school governance are important problems of a social and political order.

Crisis within the State, Globalisation and "New Economy"

The advocacy of models of school-based management (SBM) forms part of a wider movement to restructure public services. Various authors attribute this to the "crisis of the State", which became apparent in the closing decades of the twentieth century. This feeling of crisis was described by Waters (1995) as follows: "states appeared unable to make economies grow, unable to offer transparency and value for money in the exercise of power, and unable to ensure a certain future for their populations" (Waters, 1995, p160). In the educational sphere, the problems of the governability of the State were to manifest themselves specifically in an inability to deal with growing social diversity, widespread dissatisfaction with the output of the education system

and failure to keep up with the pace of cultural, economic and technological change (Barber, 1996).

The problems of legitimating the State have been defined according to two essential parameters: the impact of globalisation on the Keynesian model of development, and the inadequacy of bureaucratic structures to solve the problems of "high modernity" societies (Giddens, 1997).

In relation to the impact of globalisation, it has been argued that contemporary societies are based on a global flow of goods, services, finance, people, signs and ideas unprecedented at any other time in history. This scenario has placed a variety of constraints on State intervention:

- difficulty in maintaining clearly-defined national frontiers, given the growth of world trading blocks, the internationalization of labour markets and the increased mobility of finances and production (Hobsbawn, 1994, Kenway *et al* 2000; Lingard & Rivzi, 2001);
- the need to give priority to the foreign competitiveness of the economy, as opposed to regulating market excesses (Blackmore, 1999);
- the absence of legal instruments to exercise effective fiscal control over the activities of ever more powerful economic agents (Latham, 1998)

Alongside these changes, there has emerged an increased scepticism as to the capacity of the State to give continuity to social policies of an inclusive nature, designed to make viable a more equitable and more participatory society. These policies had been gradually developed throughout the twentieth century, particularly during the post-war period, and corresponded to an acknowledgement of the social rights of workers (employment, health, education, social security, housing). They were greatly fuelled by the Keynesian dream of bringing into peaceful coexistence the interests of the economy, the State ("apparatus") and the citizen:

> [State intervention] helped to balance supply and demand without the violent cyclical swings characteristic of competitive markets (...) it promoted economies of scale through nationalization or merger policies, encouraged Fordist mass consumption through its housing and transport policies, and generalised norms of mass consumption through intervention

> in labour markets and collective bargaining and through its provision for collective consumption (Jessop, 1996, p255).

This was achieved through the development of complex and comprehensive welfare structures - health care, support for children and the elderly, sponsorship of cultural, recreational and sporting activities - significant changes to existing structures. In the field of education, for example, it produced major innovations: expansion of compulsory schooling, implementation of comprehensive education, increased support to children with special needs and learning difficulties, community education, school medical services and school meals.

However, this caring and progressive state did not play a purely "beneficent" role. Indeed, battalions of highly-trained experts, created by the Welfare State, played an important role as guardians of normality (Rivenem & Rinne, 2000). In exchange for this normality, the "caring state" offered its citizens "a normal employment", a "life-time occupation", "owner occupier housing", and the "nuclear family" (Rivinem & Rinne, 2000). Through the "full recognition of social rights and the high level of transferences involved, these policies eventually transformed the political nature of relations between the State and civil society" (Santos *et al*, 2001, p85).

The subsequent destabilisation of the economic foundations of the Keynesian State (based upon mass production, low price energy) and the development of globalisation led to the emergence of a new political and economic agenda in the neo-liberal mould, which was highly critical of the political foundation and economic viability of the Welfare State [2].

Under the influence of neo-liberal perspectives and the constraints imposed by the process of globalisation, the role of the nation State has, to a greater or lesser extent, according to variations in different settings, been modified and limited and become more "competitive", in two senses of the word: firstly by cutting down its running costs; secondly in giving primacy to the economic dimensions of its activity. This process of the adaptation of the state would give rise to a

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[2] see, for instance, the World Bank report, "Averting the Old Age Crisis", 1994.

certain convergence of national policies in various situations, of which SBM would be one example, with certain common key features. "These are: fiscal discipline, public expenditure priorities, tax reform, financial liberalization, exchange rates, trade liberalization, foreign direct investment, privatization, *deregulation*, and property rights" (Dale, 1999, p4, my emphasis).

The logical outcome of these policy priorities was increasing pressure to cut back and privatise services provided by the State, the quest for alternatives to direct public provision (contracting out, partnerships), the gradual opening up of the public sector to the dictates of the market (competition, cost reduction) and, more recently, direct private sector participation in the delivery of state services. In the educational domain, this situation created a climate favourable to the acceptance of a "new orthodoxy" (Carter & O'Neill, 1995, Ball, 1998) built upon a limited set of basic principles:

(1) Improving national economics by tightening the connection between schooling, employment, productivity and trade;
(2) Enhancing student outcomes in employment-related skills and competences;
(3) Attaining more direct control over curriculum content and assessment;
(4) Reducing the costs to government of education
(5) Increasing community input to education by more direct involvement in school decision making and pressure of market choice.

(Ball, 1998a, p12)

This new orthodoxy also included a trenchant critique of those traditional forms of organisation - professional, bureaucratic and Fordist - which were considered ill-suited to the demands of complexity and change in the modern world (Clark & Newman, 1997; Gewirtz, 2002). Bureaucratic structures came in for the heaviest criticism, from neo-liberal and neo-managerial perspectives, as being costly, undemocratic and open to corporatism, as well as being the inflexible generators of resistance to change and innovation. This new policy commonsense is disseminated through multi-lateral organisations which are highly powerful and prestigious politically. "For example, an OCDE (1995:7) study of public sector reforms observed that old style bureaucratic structures

which were "highly centralised, rule-bound, and inflexible" and "which emphasised process rather than results" inhibited efficiency and effectiveness and were not able to respond rapidly enough to the demands of change" (Taylor *et al*, 1997, p79).

The logical consequence of this type of diagnosis, when taken as a whole, was that the public sector had no alternative but to accommodate directly (choice, competition, market) or indirectly to the methods of the private sector ("new public management"). The pressure for change is particularly noticeable in the field of education, where the emergence of different types of school based management (SBM) has become such a widespread phenomenon that some authors consider it to be a "universal trend" (Karlsten, 2000). In the next section I shall therefore critically describe and analyse the basic principles behind SBM.

SBM - Principles and Consequences

In their famous trilogy on self-managing schools, Caldwell and Spinks (1988, 1992, 1998) developed one of the most detailed and elaborate conceptualisations of SBM. The perspectives of these authors attracted, moreover, considerable attention in the professional world (Ball, 1994; Whitty, 2002). I shall therefore take this trilogy as my main point of reference when describing and analysing SBM.

School Autonomy (a "simultaneous loose-tight system")

In colloquial and political parlance, SBM is often considered to be a form of educational decentralization. Caldwell and Spinks (1992, 1998) argue that this idea is clearly wide of the mark, given that the central authorities, even in the SBM model, continue to wield considerable authority on questions of policy, as noted earlier:

> centrally determined frameworks of goals, policies, priorities, curriculum, standards and accountabilities *will be strengthened* (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998, p215, my emphasis).

The "freedom" of schools is therefore exercised within a framework that fails to add up to a significant redistribution of power between the central authorities and the school organisations. As previously mentioned, educational decentralization and school autonomy are, in the opinion of these authors, of an administrative rather than a political nature. In other words, they advocate the freedom of means but stop short at the (local) definition of educational aims and priorities. There is a strong family resemblance between the new school management models (SBM) and the managerial practices advocated by private sector management gurus. Indeed, Peters and Waterman (1982) had already considered "simultaneous loose-tight properties" to be one of the basic features of "excellent management practice". That is, flexibility of means but control of aims and results.

The division of responsibilities "between the central administration and the schools", as proposed by Caldwell and Spinks (1998) renders somewhat paradoxical the thesis of "empowerment" of local actors to which these authors subscribe. Indeed, "administrative" decentralization does not apply to the main areas of policy-making; and the new management model, as we shall see further on, is based on procedures which open the way to tighter control (e.g. school plans, audit). In this sense, SBM models run largely counter to the concept of autonomy with which they are so often associated.

> Autonomy means, unlike heteronomy, that the grouping order is not imposed by anyone from the outside, but by members of the group itself, by virtue of this very attribute, whatever form it may take (Weber, 1922, quoted in Sarmento, 1998, p19).

This view of autonomy is in direct contrast with the way in which SBM supporters see relations between schools and the central administration: the schools will not define their grouping order internally, but rather institutionalise a higher injunction ("a centrally defined framework of goals, standards and accountabilities"). Indeed, the prevailing notion of autonomy in

neo-managerial concepts is so narrow that it can even be restricted to the area of self-discipline:

> *autonomy is a product of discipline.* The discipline (a few shared values) provides the framework. It gives people confidence (to experiment, for instance) stemming from stable expectations about what really counts (...) Thus a set of shared values and rules about discipline, details and execution can provide the framework in which practical autonomy takes place routinely (Peters & Waterman, 1995, p322, my emphasis).

The "innovative" feature of neo-managerial concepts of autonomy does not lie, however , in their limited and allegedly "apolitical" nature (submission to organisational values and objectives). It lies essentially in the increased dependence of the school which the new concepts would seem to prescribe. In fact, the substance of the relationship between the educational and the social systems may be conceptualised according to two analytical dimensions: the structural context and the functional context.

> In the structural context, autonomy may be seen to refer to a type of relationship in which significant proprieties or internal relations of one system cannot be empirically derived from corresponding features within another system (...) In the functional context, autonomy may be conceptualised in the following manner. A social system may be regarded as functionally autonomous insofar as its significant social consequences, internally and externally, are not adjusted to the reproduction of another system (Fritzell, 1987, p25).

Traditionally, there was no clear-cut structural relationship between the educational and the economic domains. The more prestigious schools and levels of education were not, as a rule, based on the same type of categories and reasoning as those which characterise the economic universe (technical and instrumental). This did not invalidate the fundamental role played by education in the reproduction of social relations.

> Academic diplomas, exams and competitive selection processes, like the aristocratic titles of earlier societies, justify social divisions and differential access to positions of power. What they do not necessarily represent is a nucleus of essential skills and knowledge essential to the *technical* performance of a

> particular job. This is why social differentiation may depend, to a great extent, on a "mere" act of initial *nomination*, a famous university or a polytechnic (Bourdieu, 1997, p23).

The new concepts of school autonomy, on the other hand, set out to change the State's formal independence of the economy. The old adage that "capitalist economy is structured according to the commodity form, while the state in capitalist society is basically not" (Fritzell, 1987, p26) starts to lose credibility in a universe in which the dominant managerial concepts advocate precisely that state schooling should, wherever possible, adopt a "commodity form" and a "commodity logic" (OCDE, 1995, Caldwell and Spinks, 1994).

> National and global considerations will become increasingly important, especially with respect to curriculum and an *education system that is responsive to* national needs within *a global economy* (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992 p7).

Again, in this respect, it may be argued that the new organisational concepts represent, despite the wider legal responsibilities of schools, an attempt to increase their functional and structural dependence, rather than their autonomy.

This is why some authors have suggested the emergence of a "new correspondence" between the social relations of the educational system and those of production (Whitty, 2002). This correspondence, according to some authors, might indeed be stronger than the one identified by Bowles and Gintis between mass schooling and the system of mass production (Hickox and Moore, 1992)

These perspectives are reinforced by the importance given by SBM supporters to neo-managerialist concepts and the market in the reform of administration and public services.

Debureaucratization: neo-managerialism and the (re)discovery of the market

Bureaucracy as a means of organisational coordination emerged as an alternative to *traditional* and *charismatic* forms of authority (Weber, 1922), which proved to be wide open to nepotism, patronage and corruption (Clark & Newman, 1997). This "libertarian" dimension of bureaucracy has not been given much attention by SBM supporters, who prefer to concentrate on other negative aspects (corporatism, sluggishness, ossification) and to show up its inadequacies in respect of the "post-modern" condition (fragmentation, uncertainty, provisionality).

Successive governments, in different parts of the world, have included "debureaucratization" on their agendas, through a process that has taken a variety of forms (e.g. deregulation, contractualization, privatization). They have steadily increased their efforts, and mobilized important political and academic support. At the present time, there would seem to be two prevailing trends in this field: advocacy of neo-managerialist concepts and increased harnessing of regulation procedures inspired in the market model (Clark & Newman, 1997; Gewirtz *et al*, 1995). I will move on to look at each of these trends in a little more detail.

Neo-managerialism

Neo-managerialism and "new public management" are often interpreted as an academic discourse designed to legitimise and universalise management procedures characteristic of the private sector. However, this perspective is not limited to support of the application of traditional forms of regulation of the private sector to new social domains (administration and public services, cultural and scientific institutions). In fact, the penetration of neo-managerialism in the private sector is also a recent phenomenon. Neo or corporate managerialism appeared in the late 1970s and 1980s in the context of

processes of economic restructuring that took a variety of forms: "the de-unionisation and the loss of collective bargaining rights; "greening", the feminisation and casualisation of labour in search of cost reduction, and the greater mobility of the enterprise in national and international terms" (Clark and Newman, 1997, pp56 -57).

The new perspective is based upon an interconnected set of principles:

- *"Freedom to manage "*

Managerialism has at its centre the idea that managers should have the freedom to make decisions about the procedures used to achieve desired outcomes (Clark & Newman, 1997). The establishment of the "right to manage" does not restrict itself, however, to transforming power relations between the various organisational actors (bureaucrats, executives and professionals). Concomitantly the State should, by "devolving authority" and "providing flexibility"[3], remove unnecessary constraints to organisational decision-making: policies should favour direct and indirect exposure to market forces (marketing, contracting out, partnerships); incentives should be structured around outputs; resources constraints should force institutions to pursue "efficiency" and cultural shifts should encourage a wider adoption of "economic calculation".

- *Definition of an organisational focus*

The remaking of the public sector generally implies a narrowing in the definition of services. Indeed, from a neo-managerial viewpoint, the choice of a "core business" or "organisational focus" has clear advantages: it strengthens organisational cohesion; legitimates the withdrawal from previously undertaken activities; introduces differentiations among the workforce (core and contingent staff, external contractors); encourages service fragmentation between providers, and allows the development of forms of quasi-market competitiveness.

The idea of defining a "core business" or "organisational focus" underlies many current educational directives: to define a school "mission", to build a school "culture", to develop a school "project" (see Obin & Cros, 1991; Macedo, 1995;

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[3] OCDE,1992

Harris *et al*, 1997). However, this orientation also encourages a "mutual surveillance" (Troman, 2002) and a "struggle over visibility" among schools (Ball, 2001) which can favour the dissemination of a market ethic (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995). Moreover, the definition of an organisational focus runs counter to the exercise of the complex, diversified and multiple functions assigned to contemporary educational systems [4]. Functional specialization, which stems from the choice of a particular organisational focus, poses special problems in the realm of educational equality of opportunity. Differentiation between organisations may also produce a potential differentiation in the publics and customers who procure their services (see Bourdieu, 1982, 1997, Slee *et al*, 1997; Reay & Lucey, 2000; Reay, 2001). This trend may be irrelevant in certain segments of the market; it does, however, go against the very *raison d'être* of state schooling.

- *Ownership and self-regulation*

The restructuring of public services goes beyond aspects of a purely organisational nature. It has profound implications for the ethical and professional profiles of "welfare workers" (Cribb *et al*, 1998). Indeed, organisations run along "quasi-business" lines require a specific type of worker: enterprising, instrumental, and self-regulating individuals (Popkewitz, 1999; Smyth, 1999; Gewirtz, 2001). Under the influence of neo-managerialism, individuals are encouraged to live an existence of calculation: to "add value" to themselves; to review and compare performances; to manage careers; to take responsibility for results; to be attentive to new incentives, constraints and opportunities.

> The creation of a sense of ownership - of missions and targets, budgets and responsibility for results - has been one of the most sought-after effects of the managerial revolution, constructing commitment and motivation among staff in the pursuit of corporate objectives (...) Nevertheless, there is a conception of ownership which is a less discussed effect of such initiatives:

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[4] Grácio *et al*, 1992

> ownership as proprietorialism or possessive individualism (Clark & Newman, 1997, p79).

We are therefore witnessing an attempt to colonise the professional terrain of welfare workers (Clark and Newman, 1997, Cribb *et al*, 1998).

The pressure to produce "self-regulating" individuals does not, however, exclude the use of more traditional forms of discipline and surveillance (audit systems, performance-related pay, insecurity over contracts). Indeed, neo-managerialism is not a unitary meta-narrative (see Ball, 1994; Clark and Newman, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Whitty, 2002).

There are, however, certain basic ideas common to the different contributing narratives: the importance of the market; the reinforcement of leaders' and consumers' roles; "new" economic imperatives (efficacy, efficiency, excellence and innovation); audit and accountability.

These are the facets I shall be reflecting upon in the next section.

Regulation Through The Market

The "crisis of the State" in the seventies and eighties produced a trend in many western societies towards market provision (marketisation) and especially towards an almost universal acceptance of the rationale and "modus operandi" of market systems: competition between institutions, privileging the consumer, enhancing effectiveness, continual redefinition of products, and images and symbols associated with the particular line of business (Hartley, 1999; Lyon, 1999). This amounted to a deconstruction of the "public monopoly of education" (see Ball, 1994, p104), and to the parallel emergence of forms of marketisation of education:

> it is instructive that the private schools (...) tend to develop precisely the sorts of organisational characteristics reformers want the public schools to have (Chubb and Moe, 1997, pp378 - 379, my emphasis).

> the key to school improvement is not school reform, but institutional reform, a shift away from direct *democratic control* (Chubb and Moe 1997, p379, my emphasis).

In the most apologetic versions , the "market" solution seems to be imbued with magical powers: a kaleidoscope of multiple choices that would be the answer to everything whilst asking nothing in return. In a word, it would be sufficient to privatise, deregulate, contractualise and create private public partnerships for standards of quality in education to (magically) change. This position relies on a thorough taking on board of market ideology and associated theses:

- the belief that the pursuit of self-interest is a dominant feature of all human beings (individualism and economism);
- the presupposition that human reason is by nature progressive and that all human behaviour is endowed with personal and rational objectives (rationalism).

These qualities make it possible to associate the individual pursuit of self-interest with a future of social order and progress: development is the result of choices made by individual actors who, by virtue of that rationality with which they are endowed, seek to maximise their advantages and cut their costs.

Education, from the neo-liberal perspective, is no exception to this rule: it is in the interest of parents to choose the best school for their children; the institutionalisation of choice will, in its turn, make the quality of education a priority for managers and teachers (job survival); there will no longer be a demand for the "bad schools", and this, on the social level, will validate their restructuring or closing down. In a word, there will be both order and progress, simply as a result of "market discipline":

> The competitive process provides incentives and so evokes effort. It generates a continuous and universal search for substitutes, for ways of substituting the less desirable by the more desirable. The essence of the whole process is choice by the consumer; emulation, rivalry and substitution by the producer (Reekie, 1984 in Bowe *et al* 1992, p25).

However, the neo-liberal conviction that all goods - public or private - are best distributed by the market, is far from gaining universal acceptance (see Keep, 1992, Whitty *et al*, 1998, Lauder *et al*, 1999; Derouet, 2002). Indeed, neo-liberal concepts work on principles whose pertinence to the world of education, as to the other public services, has by no means been validated . Criticism has been focused on the following aspects:

- the belief in an "ideal consumer", rational and undifferentiated, with a perfect global vision of the market situation.

> pro-market theories tend to assume that parents have widespread knowledge of the various schools that they could send their children to (...) In contrast, Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz (1997) found that working class parents had no knowledge of the upper circuits available to them (Lauder and Hughes, 1999, p47).

- the assumption that all services and companies have a genuine interest in increasing their clientele.

However, in many cases, "organisational success" depends basically on client selection. This would seem, moreover, by virtue of the relationship between social background and school success, to be the case of education. Schools would therefore, in a market system, have additional reasons to increase the selection rather than the number of their clients.

- The identity of the logics of public services and private enterprises.

Even if the superiority of the market were undeniable, the very possibility of adapting the rules of the market to the running of public services remains a controversial issue: "in contrast to conventional markets, these organisations [schools, hospitals] are not out to maximize their profits; nor are they privately owned. Precisely what such enterprises maximize, or could be expected to maximize, is as unclear as their ownership structure (Le Grand, 1990, p5).

In spite of these critiques, the vast majority of the developed countries have adopted many of the principles of the market economy, especially those

concerning the redefining of relations between "producers" and "consumers" in their public service provision.

The Power of the Consumer

Consumerist theorists argue that there is an imbalance of power between those who provide goods and services, and those for whom they provide. The former possess all the advantages of corporate power and organisation (Potter, 1994; Clark and Newman, 1997). Adoption of the rules of the market implies, therefore, in the first place, subjecting public services to the primacy of the consumer or recreation of the surrogate consumer/producer relationship. The pursuit of this objective is not limited, however, from a neo-managerial perspective, to adopting traditional strategies of consumer participation or representation.

> The good news of the excellent companies is the extent to which, and the intensity with which, the customers intrude into every nook and cranny of the business - sales, manufacturing, research, accounting (Peter & Waterman, 1995, p157).

Therefore, the parents should be active consumers in the market place, "monitor and closely police what schools provide", "transmit appropriate forms of cultural capital" and "exploit the educational system to their children's best advantage" (Gewirtz, 2001, p367). This new model of "professional parenting" aims essentially at maximising the production of "human capital" (Vincent, 1996, 2000; Gewirtz, 2001). In this way, there emerges a model for school-family relations that has nothing whatever to do with the civic and political functions of the school.

In cases where more "advanced" market mechanisms are adopted - choice, vouchers - institutional participation and political influence become largely meaningless. Indeed, from a market perspective and from the point of view of the individual consumer, exit is an infinitely more "efficient" strategy than

voice. Why waste time making demands when you can simply change "brand" (school) or "supplier" [5]?

The supremacy of the consumer also helps, as we said above, to make the distinction between public and private largely meaningless: the organisational autonomy granted to schools makes it possible for local interests (particular) to prevail over public principles (general); mechanisms are put in place for "competition" or for interconnecting the public and the private sectors (voucher systems; contracting out of services); the incentive for school/company partnerships and, in a more general sense, the priority given to training for the "labour market", all make for a thorough cultural restructuring of the education system.

Political confidence in the "opening up to the community" and the merging of the frontiers between the public and private sectors is not surprising if we bear in mind the political benefits derived by the State from the institutionalisation of principles like choice of school, "institutional" participation and the creation of local educational partners (Heiler, 1999). Indeed, these directives favour a redefining of the relations between State and citizens in which the latter are essentially perceived as individual consumers or restricted decision-makers. The influence of these individual consumers or *"atomised"* and *"localised"* citizens is radically different from that which used to be exerted through parent/teacher associations: it may be contained within the limited sphere of each organisation and easily exercised within the framework of policies defined at a higher level. It can also be used to curb the professional autonomy of teachers who become exposed to more individualized and immediate pressure from the parents (Vincent & Tomlinson, 1997; Van Zanten, 2002).

In fact, although the "institutional freedom" won by the central administration in this process, as well as the advantages accrued in the political arena (participatory discourse, effects on state "legitimation" and accountability),

[5] private schools, state schools, specialized schools, schools with a specific "ethnic", religious or political orientation

should not be underestimated, the main consequences associated with the institutionalisation of consumer power would seem to be of a social nature. Indeed, in spite of the purported neutrality and universality associated with the workings of the market, there is nothing natural, neutral or universal about the "marketisation" of education:

> The market form valorises certain types of cultural and social capital which are unevenly distributed across the population. The use of these capitals in choice-making and choice-getting enables certain social groups to maintain or change their position in the social structure (Ball & Vincent, 2000, p6).

Indeed, differences have been recorded between the middle and the working classes, both in the extent to which they exercise school choice (Van Zanten, 2002; Ball, 2003), and in the procedural sphere implied by the new system:

> To decode school systems and organisations, to discriminate between schools in terms of policies and practices, to engage with and question (and challenge if necessary) teachers and school managers, to critically evaluate teachers' responses and to collect, scan and interpret various sources of information (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p25).

This is why the marketisation of education should also be interpreted as part of a wider process of reorganisation of the relations between the different social groups at a time of great uncertainty for the middle classes (Ball & Vincent, 2000; Afonso, 2000). This uncertainty stems from the convergence of various factors: the end of the "monopoly" on access to higher education; loss of job security due to frequent professional and organisational restructuring; changes in contractual procedures (performance-related pay, fixed-term contracts, individual or organisational); increased competition in the market place (globalisation, joblessness of well-qualified professionals, new professional patterns).

In this "high risk" scenario it should come as no surprise that there may be a loss of support among the new middle class for efforts to democratise education and social policy: education is a "positional good" (Hirst, 1976). Differentiation

in the education system - generated by the various forms of SBM, the development of public-private ownership and the systems of choice - may be an important instrument in the renovation of middle class traditional advantages in the educational field.

Some authors are even of the opinion that contemporary educational policies are primarily aimed at satisfying the concerns and interests of the middle classes (Ball, 2003). Indeed, the process of social differentiation associated with the new administrative directives would seem to transcend political and national frontiers (Van Zanten & Ball, 1998; Lauder & Hughes, 1999; Thrupp, 2001; Van Zanten, 2002).

> The [New labour] government is implementing policies that are likely to solidify and exaggerate hierarchies of schooling. It has retained the per capita funding mechanism (...) It has retained the status differentials between types of school (...) [and expanded] the initiative which concentrates additional resources on schools designated as specialists and which allows these schools to select a proportion of their student body. As a consequence of these policies, the tendency towards polarisation between well-resourced, "high-performing" schools serving a mainly middle class clientele and poorly resourced "low-performing" schools serving a mainly working -class clientele is likely to continue (Gewirtz, 2001, p373).

The vision of the leader, at the service of a "business culture"

The success of schools in the market place implies a thorough overhauling of organisational priorities. The needs of the students, which used to be a basic feature of bureaucratic and professional ethical standards, now has to be weighed against the struggle for survival and the need to safeguard 'image' with which the new "autonomous" school organisations are confronted. The "new public management" will therefore have to take on a distinctly entrepreneurial dimension, assimilating basic aspects of an "entrepreneurial culture" (OCDE, 1995; Smyth, 1999).

The policies of devolved management, according to neo-managerial and neo-liberal interpretations of the concept, aim to confer on local actors "the tools and

the incentive to behave in more cost-effective, flexible, competitive, consumer-satisfying and innovative ways" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p90). The success of this "mission" depends to a great extent, from the perspectives under analysis, on the strategic "vision" of the organisational leaders and on the management procedures adopted by them (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Dunford *et al*, 2000). In summary, success in the market place presupposes the development of a new type of school leadership, key features of which will include responsiveness to the customer, the quest for a competitive edge over other local schools, financial management and the motivation and monitoring of "human resources" (see Chapter 4). This leadership, despite a marked symbolic and cultural connotation (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Dunford *et al*, 2000) will inevitably include distinctly "pragmatic" features (Moore, 2001). Indeed, acceptance of the rules of the market "creates pressures which drive management decision-making within schools, towards *commercial* and away from *educational and social* considerations, although these are not always mutually exclusive" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p90).

A market orientation clearly facilitates, moreover, an extension of the "right to manage" (Clark & Newman, 1997) and the "managerial prerogative" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995) with which they are associated. This extension derives in the first place from the key role played by head teachers in relation to families. The sanctioning of the principle of the primacy of the "customer" can thus only consolidate the institutional position of directors in the *internal* school hierarchy (the Portuguese situation is particularly telling in this context, as can be seen in Chapter 4). In addition, the present-day duties of a school leader, compared with the past, require skills not included in traditional modes of teacher training (commercial, financial and organisational). The chances of effective institutional participation on the part of professional educators are thus somewhat reduced. The very process of devolution implies transfer to the schools of a considerable number of daily management operations which teachers will be hard pressed to participate in, influence or control (see Bowe & Ball, 1992). In this sense, the school manager's freedom of movement is clearly

increased by the process of devolution (although there are also fresh restrictions imposed by the power of the consumer and the new forms of regulation of the central administration).

The "right to manage" is also strengthened by the prevailing cultural codes in the form of the emphasis laid on individual initiative (symbolized by the duties of leadership) and the achievement of results (irrespective of the means). The "maelstrom of change" (Formosinho & Ferreira, 1998) that permeates contemporary political discourse, combined with the unpredictability of a market-based organisational dynamic, also provides more than adequate justification for the disdain given to participatory organisational structures in the name of speed and the technical nature of decision-making. The new "representative" bodies in schools may well, in certain cases, serve more to ratify managerial initiatives than to make feasible a real definition of local educational policies. It would seem highly likely that "speed decision-making" would come to prevail over the empowerment of local actors.

> It is therefore possible to argue that the market may be facilitating an assertion of *"technical rationality"* in school management over and against *"substantive rationality"* (Considine, 1988). The emphasis of technical rationality is upon the development of techniques, procedures and organisational practices which are intended to facilitate speed decision-making, coordination, the setting and reviewing of objectives, good financial controls and information, cost improvement, responsiveness and consumer loyalty. The emphasis of substantive rationality is upon the intrinsic qualities of the "product-process" - here education, teaching and learning (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p92).

The Three "E"s: Efficacy, Efficiency and Excellence

Support of SBM presupposes that these management models represent a positive contribution to the efficacy and quality of education. The reasons given to justify this conviction are, as has already been mentioned, organisational and "economic": the *value added* by neo-managerialism and the rules of the market. There is also the conviction that the micro-systems, which devolution policies

seek to reproduce, have distinct advantages from the point of view of innovation: "the most discouraging fact of big companies is the loss of what got them big in the first place: innovation" (Peters & Waterman, 1995, p202).
Deployment of these concepts may vary in intensity from country to country (Whitty et al, 1998; Barroso, 2000; Maroy & Dupriez, 2000), but the quest for efficacy and quality is a recurring argument for the reform of school government. However, finding solid scientific grounds to support the new managerial concepts is no easy task. Even the supporters of SBM recognise that there is very little research evidence to support any direct relation between school achievement and the new forms of school government (see Caldwell & Spinks, 1998, p41). In addition, there is an extensive body of criticism of the movement for efficient schools (see Barroso, 1996; Slee et al, 1998; Dias, 1999; Morley & Rassol, 1999), which is one of the main sources of inspiration and validation for the SBM models.

In fact, research carried out in recent years, designed to assess the impact of SBM, has failed to come up with proof positive of the superiority of these models of organisation over and against those they have replaced (see Whitty *et al*, 1998; Lauder *et al* 1999; Gorard & Fitz, 1999) The empirical evidence, therefore, does not seem sufficient on its own to justify the marked swing towards SBM in contemporary societies. It seems reasonable, then, to seek alternative interpretations for this swing, for example in the requirements of the demands for "quality" and "audit" that have become ever-present references in current policy discourse.

The "auditing State" and the "terrors of performativity"

The use of auditing procedures for teaching practices and results is a traditional feature of education systems, though they may take different forms in different countries (Broadfoot, 2000). However, we have seen since the eighties an unprecedented extension of the domains of accountability (schools, training,

education policies) and of the methods and mechanisms used (self-scrutiny, internal assessment, independent assessment). Some authors even refer to the existence of a qualitatively novel situation in this respect, to which they have given the designation "auditing State" (Neave, 1998; Broadfoot, 2000; Maroy & Dupriez, 2000). The transition from a traditional system to an "auditing State" system includes the following phenomena: "the focusing of the central administration on strategic aspects of the system's development, by defining the aims and the quality criteria of the end product; the emergence of powerful intermediary bodies of specialists to operate as the direct agents of evaluation and coordination; and emphasis on the self-government of schools" (Afonso, 2001, p24).

The impact of the auditing state is clear from the increasing importance given to the mechanisms of *accountability* and *"self-governing schools"* in contemporary societies, transcending the cultural, institutional and political traditions of each country. There are even those who consider this to be the only common denominator in the various devolution experiments conducted in recent decades (Broadfoot, 2000; Afonso, 2001).

Meanwhile, the foundations for the creation and expansion of an auditing state are the object of controversy. To begin with, the defining of "uniform" standards of quality by the central administration runs counter to the tenor of contemporary policy discourse (autonomy, flexibility, creativity, and diversity). Secondly, it implies a return to positivist principles and favours "underestimation of the multireferentiality of evaluation procedures which has come to be seen as the answer to the crisis of traditional paradigms in this field" (Afonso, 2001, p23; see also Afonso, 1998; Fernandes, 1998; Broadfoot, 2000).

The impact of the new accountability policies would, in addition, seem to be having a destructive effect on the motivation of many pupils and teachers.

As far as the pupils are concerned, some authors speak of "learned incompetence" or "trained incapacity", which they associate with a return to practices of "teaching to the test" (Lauder *et al*, 1999; Ball, 1999, p200). They also refer to the emphasis on narrowly focused, classroom-based knowledge and

skills, aimed at maximising students' examination performance (Ball, 1999). In short, practices which would seem to be totally ill suited to the "glamour" of the "new economy" and the "information society", the major arguments used to justify the development of evaluation policies.

The new forms of evaluation may, furthermore, provide teachers with a powerful incentive to concentrate on the students who could "make the difference", while the schools themselves consolidate their mechanisms for the "exclusion" of pupils who show limited academic potential: children with special educational needs, ethnic minorities, socially disadvantaged groups (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Riddell *et al*, 1999; Vincent, 2000).

With regard to the teachers, there is a real danger that they might be caught between the "imperatives of prescription", the "disciplines of performance" (Ball, 1999) and the "right to manage" of the new organisational leaders (Clark & Newman, 1997). In this case, teachers would be "over determined" rather than "empowered" by the new managerial concepts (see Chapter 3 & 6). We should, therefore, devote some attention to the principles of "new professionalism".

"New Professionalism"

The reform of school governance has gone hand in hand with the promise of a new teaching professionalism, which in turn will imply transformations at a variety of levels (Hargreaves D., 1994; Caldwell & Spinks, 1998):

- development of the team and partnership working procedures associated with the "flatter" organisations;
- redefinition of professional skills, to bring them into line with the needs of the new economy ("back to basics", IT, focus on outcomes);
- diversification of contract types and forms of career advancement ("new unionism", performance-paid jobs).

In relation to the first of these areas, it should above all be stressed that there is considerable support for the need to "adjust" (subordinate) the flexibility and

initiative of individuals and groups to the overriding values and goals of the organisation. The aim is to create an organisational environment "where everyone is responsible for achieving corporate goals and everyone is enterprising in pursuit of them" (Clark & Newman, 1997, p62).

Such an approach, however, begs the question of how to reconcile the "empowerment" of teachers with the priority given by SBM supporters to "transformational leadership" and closeness to the customer (see Chapter 3).

With regard to the second area of transformation, the adjustments required to bring professional skills into line with the demands of the new economy, mention should be made of aspects related to "early literacy and mathematics; the adoption of information and communication technology; a broader view of outcomes to attach a fuller and richer meaning to the concept of "value added"; and practice in the "integrated school" (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998). This concept implies a return to basics, made more palatable by the reference to IT. The new professional demands also imply a greater emphasis on technical and administrative skills rather than substantive ones (pedagogic):

> Compare these high expectations [to analyse league tables, school and inspection reports] with what applied to most teachers until recently, when all that was required was a capacity to devise and administer classroom-based tests and report the results to parents each term.
> The role is even more demanding if value-added measures are used, where data may be provided on a classroom-by-classroom, subject-by-subject basis (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998, p136).

The "new professionalism", contrary to what the designation suggests, would therefore seem to offer limited scope for teacher autonomy and creativity. Indeed, evaluation systems exert a normalizing pressure, create conditions in which performance evaluation is extended from pupils to teachers, generate inevitable comparisons and hierarchies between teachers, and lend themselves to the institutionalisation of forms of performance-related pay (Troman, 1997, 2000; Ball, 1999).

The negative consequences for teachers of the new professional requirements are not, moreover, brushed aside by SBM supporters:

> Resources provision has rarely been adequate and teachers have been expected to be fundraisers as well as teachers, counsellors, de facto parents, welfare providers and police officers (...) Incessant attention to measurement and comparison with other schools add to the pressure of being a teacher. Structures of support and supervision have been downsized, out-sourced or have disappeared altogether (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998, p128).

However, these problems are considered to be of relatively minor importance when compared with the opportunities provided by the new forms of school governance: autonomy, flexibility, and creativity. Other authors, however, hold a far less optimistic view of the effective freedoms offered by SBM (see Smyth *et al*, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002):

An analysis of the promises made by the "new professionalism", in the light of the distinction which may be made between professionalization (a sociological project to enhance the interests of an occupational group) and professionalism (the characteristics and the internal quality of people's action within this group) leads us to adopt an equally critical stance. Indeed, the notion of professionalism advanced by the concepts under analysis does little to enhance the pedagogic dimension of a teacher's work and may represent a threat to their professionalization if external "accountability", support of the primacy of the consumer, and the "right to manage" become the dominant principles of the public system of schooling.

We should, however, be prepared for the hypothesis, which I shall discuss in greater depth in the third part of this study, that SBM will bring with it, simultaneously, tendencies towards deprofessionalization and reprofessionalization, and that these will assume different degrees of importance according to their context.

SBM - Contradictions and Potentialities

The analysis of the main principles behind SBM leads us to conclude that we are faced with a considerably more complex process than we could at first imagine from the political rhetoric and the specialist literature on the subject. This complexity stems from certain factors that SBM supporters either ignore or downplay when shaping their proposals: the importance of the context of the reform, the contradictory nature of the constituent principles of SBM, and the sociological and political interests that underlie and drive the reform of school administration.

In relation to the first of these, I should stress the enormous divergence that exists between the way in which SBM advocates describe the context that produced SBM (globalisation, increased competitiveness, intensification of the change process, frequent professional restructuring) and the institutional solutions which they propose (local dynamics, collegiality, school culture, institutional involvement).

In addition, the contextual factors of the reform - distrust of the public sector, the State's financial crisis, negative view of the quality of bureaucratic schooling - are used solely to vindicate the need for change. There is no reference to how these aspects might limit the actual range of the reforms (e.g. fostering competitive rather than "flatter" and collegiate working contexts, limiting financial support to schools, making "choice" difficult for working class families). This silence explains why some authors say that the new managerial perspectives are invested with an almost magical quality (Hamilton, 1997; Lauder *et al*, 1999). If such be the case, it is in the financial domain that the magic will really have to work, given that governments are decoupling reform from funding and, in some cases, making real cuts in their budgets for education as part of a strategy which would seem hardly compatible with the emphasis attributed to education and the quality of training of human resources (Levin, 1997; Barroso, 2000).

A second type of problem is, as has been shown throughout this Chapter, the contradictory nature of the constituent principles of SBM. Levin (1997) offered a particularly revealing summary of the inconsistencies that may be identified in this respect:

> If choice is meaningful there is no reason for parents to invest in the process of governance and improvement, any more than consumers will work hard to improve the products of a particular company as opposed to switching to another company instead (...) Both choice and local management are also potentially inconsistent with the move towards more centralized curricula and assessment. Choice is only meaningful if the things to be chosen differ in some respect. Similarly, local management is only meaningful if there are some decisions about organisational form and purpose to be made. Both local management and choice are about encouraging diversity in schooling arrangements. Common curriculum and assessment push in exactly the other direction. If all the schools are expected to teach the same, why bother with local management and choice? Moreover, institutional theory points to the tendency for all institutions of a certain kind to take a common form (Powell and Dimaggio, 1991). In schools, where assessment practices are held to have a strong influence on the entire nature of the institutions, it seems likely that more standardized assessment will lead to schools looking more like each other rather than becoming more diversified (Levin, 1997, p263).

The contradictory nature of the reforms also extends to the strategies favoured for achieving significant improvement in the quality of teaching: stress on the administrative aspect to the detriment of the pedagogic; holding local actors responsible for the success or failure of national, supranational and global policies and giving emphasis to entrepreneurial behaviour while imposing standardised forms of organisation and pedagogy.

Mention should also be made of the risks of increased social inequality inherent in SBM. Indeed, this form of management represents an important step towards the sanctioning of neo-liberal and neo-managerial educational principles. From a policy perspective, the problem of schools and their inhabitants "is construed as an absence within certain individuals of enterprising skills" (Smyth, 1999, p458). However, the triumph of neo-liberal policies has gone hand in hand with

a marked increase in inequalities (Santos *et al*, 2001; Derouet, 2002). The marketisation of education would seem to be no exception to this rule, given that choice in education is influenced by social and ethnic factors (Reay, 1998, 2001; Lauder *et al*, 1999). Some authors even consider that the education markets are guilty of "chronic failure", a failure which especially affects the more vulnerable educational institutions and social strata (Dale & Robertson, 2001, p30). This failure is the result, among other things, of difficulty in:

- effecting the "spread" of reforms to depleted and residual communities;
- reversing the decline of the "unpopular suppliers", due to the pressure and strategic orientation of the more powerful consumers.

Indeed, the policies of choice of school have fuelled, in many cases, the trend among the most sought-after schools to form "middle-class clubs" and to segregate pupils considered to be elements of risk (Dale & Robertson, 2001, p130).

In view of the critique to which SBM has been subjected throughout this chapter the question remains as to why it continues to make itself felt so strongly in contemporary educational policies (see also Weiler, 1999). I would suggest that there are three main factors involved. In the first place, the development of forms and structures of "high modernity" is exerting pressure to bring the education system into line with the new features of the labour market and the employment structure (neo- and post-Fordism, accent on the tertiary sector, subcontracting). Secondly, we have the stepping-up of the "governamentability" project (Foucault, 1979), begun with the liberal societies of the nineteenth century and geared towards the production of a "mind that would govern the soul" (Popkewitz, 1999, p16). In this sense, personal autonomy (and by extension organisational "autonomy") should not be understood as "the antithesis of political power but [as] a key term in its exercise" (Rose & Miller, 1992, quoted in Popkewitz, 1999, p19).

Finally, we should bear in mind that SBM offers undoubted advantages to the State, when it comes to handling conflicts (division between local actors,

isolation and localization of problems), legitimising policies (transfer of responsibilities to local level, invisibility of power, relinquishing of routine management problems) and recovering the credibility lost during recent decades. SBM thus constitutes an extremely useful political strategy, even if reforms in school administration may have no positive impact whatsoever on the quality of pupils' learning.

These considerations do not mean, of course, that the "decentralising" agenda constitutes an ideologically monolithic block. On the contrary, the term "decentralisation" is, as has already been mentioned, supported by extremely diverse political sensibilities (see *SBM - a definition).* In current educational reforms, there is therefore a frequent convergence of different agendas, interest groups and action logics (Barroso, 1999, 2000). It would seem, however, that recent decades have been dominated, in respect of school governance, by the triumph of the neo-liberal and technocratic agendas, to the detriment of projects based on a granting of real decision-making power to schools and local communities (Stoer *et al*, 1990; Fernandes, 1995; Taylor *et al*, 1997; Vincent & Tomlison, 1997; Ball, 1999; Robertson, 1999; Santos *et al*, 2001).

But this is not inevitable. I should therefore like to stress, paraphrasing Levin (1997), that the analysis I have made in this chapter should not be read as being simply a critique of strategies of decentralisation, choice and assessment:

> Each strategy could, depending on its application, have useful outcomes. Decentralisation could allow communities, and especially non-educators, to play a more important role in directing their schools and in meeting local needs (...) Choice could push parents and students to think more about the kind of school that would be of greatest benefit, and it could push schools to think more about the needs of those they serve. *Measures to avoid school choice becoming a means of social segregation would be especially important,* as would policies that encouraged real diversity in school programs, not only in appearances. Assessment can be a means of giving everybody involved with education more meaningful information about how well students are doing. (...) [The key is] to look at the real impact of policies and how these can be shaped in desirable ways (Levin, 1997,p 266, my emphasis).

The process obviously requires, on the part of local actors, a capacity for critical intervention and determination in the face of the more problematic aspects of current educational policies. No easy task, given the sophisticated forms of social regulation prevailing in contemporary societies (Amin, 1996; Menter *et al*, 1997; Gordon & Whitty, 1997; Sarmento *et al*, 1999; Stoer & Cortesão, 1999; Lyon, 1999).

In the main body of the thesis I will return to many of the issues raised here and explore more concretely and specifically the extent to which the central tenets of analysis are born out, or contradicted, by the case of primary school reform in Portugal. In fact, having described the principal premises upon which school autonomy is based, it is now time to look at the extent of the phenomenon in Portugal, the conditions that have influenced its development, and the constraints on this process.

Local Management of Education in Portugal (1974-1998)

Social, Political and Educational Antecedents

Portugal is one of the oldest European states, having acquired its political independence in the twelfth century and its present-day frontiers in the mid thirteenth century. The need to remain independent of Spain was the basis of an early process of centralization of political power which was strengthened, in the fifteenth century, with the maritime epic and the policy of colonial exploitation. Successive versions of the "fool's paradise" (the spice trade, Brazilian gold, the "rediscovery" of Africa) allowed Portugal to maintain its colonial empire until the final quarter of the twentieth century. Its socio-economic structures remained, however, curiously under-developed. Thus, when the Republic was declared (1910), the overwhelming majority of the people were traditional agricultural labourers, and an extremely high proportion was illiterate (around two-thirds). Besides this, the middle class was politically powerless against the alliance formed by the great landowners, the Catholic Church and bankers with

overseas connections (Afonso, 1995). As a result the First Republic (1910-1926) was short-lived and turbulent, fraught with successive changes of government and great political and social instability.

In 1926, a military coup gave rise to a fascist-style political regime: the "New State". Proceeding along lines similar to those adopted in some others European countries, Portuguese politicians suppressed most of the citizens' civic liberties, abolished trade unions and political parties, introduced censorship and political persecution and gave particular attention to the indoctrination of children and young people. This is the background to the development in Portugal of mass education which, contrary to what had taken place in democratic countries, was not concerned either with education for citizenship or the granting of minimum educational qualifications. It was aimed essentially at educating for "passivity" (Formosinho, 1990). Primary education in particular (nicknamed the "sacred workshop of souls") was surrounded by almost obsessive precautions: teacher training colleges were closed for a number of years for extensive overhaul; teachers' meetings were forbidden, as was any discussion concerning the aims and objectives of education; syllabus content, including textbooks, was redefined in such a way as to throw into relief the central values of the regime (God, Nation Family and Authority) and to avoid the excessive "intellectualisation" of children; the day-to-day life of the school was subject to rigid control, which even included the way classrooms were decorated and the physical appearance of the teachers (dress, absence of make-up); teachers, in a position of extreme subservience to the State, were obliged to swear allegiance to the regime, to seek permission to marry and to comply with regulations concerning their conduct in the school and in the community; schools were closely supervised, not only through formal mechanisms (inspectors and super inspectors) but also through "civic" appeals for the political denouncement of any teacher who departed from the established code (Bivar, 1975; Monica, 1978). The New State thus took the country's centralist tradition to an extreme. Any important educational decisions became the exclusive domain of the central administration:

curriculum, finance, staffing, pedagogy, teacher training, design and location of the buildings, textbooks, equipment, daily running of the school.

This state of affairs persisted even after the fall of fascist dictatorships in other European countries, which forced the New State to change tack in its political discourse. This was in fact the beginning of a new phase for the regime: the phase of "proudly alone", which heralded the inevitable decline of the New State. Meanwhile, in spite of external pressures (victory of the allies) and some internal pressure (advance of industrialization), "the country's economy remained relatively closed until the late sixties, when the colonial war and the expansion of world trade led to massive foreign investment" (Afonso, 1994, p95). Following an unsuccessful attempt at liberalization in the late sixties, which coincided with the withdrawal and death of the dictator Oliveira Salazar, the New State was abolished in 1974. What became known as the "Carnation Revolution" or "April Revolution", the military coup and popular uprising which helped to overthrow the dictatorship, signalled the beginning of a period of democracy in Portugal, after almost half a century of dictatorship (1926-1974).

The democratisation of the country coincided with a period of rapid transformations in the productive structures, initiated during World War II (Costa, 1975; Loureiro *et al* 1985). These changes eventually led to a drastic reduction of the agricultural population and a concomitant growth in the service sector. In this respect, superficially at least, Portugal began to resemble other developed countries. This resemblance belies, however, a complex social structure characterized by deep divides, different rates of development and a very particular role played by the State in social regulation. This is why Portuguese society has been described as semi-peripheral. This is defined by Santos (1990), one of the Portuguese authors who has been most concerned with this issue, as follows:

> Semi-peripheral societies ensure the relative satisfaction of the immediate interests of wide sectors of the population (...) in the light of prevailing models of consumption. This, however, is due neither to high levels of productivity nor to great formal

> institutionalisation of the relationship between capital and labour, as exists in the central countries. It is rather the result of a complex social network in which this relationship is developed and which, in its turn, creates mechanisms to compensate for delays in production relationships while at the same time shattering the conflicts between capital and labour. This mitigation of conflict is not due to the presence of the middle classes (intermediaries between the *bourgeoisie* and the workers), as is the case in central countries, but to the presence of social strata and fractions of classes located beside and below them (...) The working of these mechanisms presupposes a complex system of social arbitration (...) *entrusted to the State, which then tends to play a central role in social regulation* (Santos, 1990, pp109-110, my emphasis).

In relation to the political structure of semi-peripheral societies, it is also important to stress that the power stemming from the role played by the State in the sphere of social regulation does not convert easily into the legitimation of the State, as is the case in "core" countries:

- the functioning of the state, even when democratic, relies on an extremely delicate political balance (Santos, 1990);
- there is a far more marked discrepancy between the legal framework and social practices than in other countries. This means that the juridical and political framework has difficulty in penetrating social relations and is rarely fully implemented (Santos, 1990).

This discrepancy between the legal framework and social practices will, as we shall see, take on different forms in the period following the "April Revolution"; and it is particularly important if we are to understand the successive advances, regressions and fresh starts that characterize the history of school autonomy in Portugal (1974-98).

School autonomy in Portugal: self-management experiment, recentralization, "soft" devolution and devolution-modernisation

Following the establishment of political democracy in Portugal, local school management went through three clearly distinct phases, that is the self-

management experiment, recentralization, and "soft devolution" (Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994; Estevão, 1995). It is this latter process which seems to be gaining strength, heralding a new phase more marked by devolution policies and *rapprochement* to managerial models of a neo-managerial type (Afonso, 1997, Formosinho & Ferreira, 1998; Dias, 1999). This will be designated as "devolution-modernisation".

Self-management experiment

In the first months of the revolution, "turbulent meetings of teachers, students and other school staff dismissed school directors appointed by the Salazar government on a basis of political trust" (Afonso, 1994, p26). Power was thus shifted to school plenaries and to so-called "ad-hoc" committees, elected at those meetings (Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994).

This process seems to have permeated all levels of education, although it would seem to have been particularly relevant on secondary and higher education. However, in-depth studies so far carried out have focused mainly on secondary education (Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994; Costa, 7) and we must wait for more substantial evidence concerning the form the process has taken in other educational sub-systems.

It is nevertheless undeniable that the "April Revolution" brought with it a mass mobilization of social actors - virtually unparalleled in post-war European history - which made itself felt in practically every sector of Portuguese society (Santos, 1990).

In the case of education, it saw the beginning of "a process of constructing alternative forms of school governance, although outside the jurisdiction of any higher authority or official orientation" (Lima, 1999, p43). Thus was born the first phase of *democratic school management* (the designation by which the movement came to be known), a phase marked by active participation and, in some cases, strong opposition to established political directives (Lima, 1992). This "occupation of schools" (Stoer, 1985) did not take place within the

framework of any project for decentralization or devolution: it was simply actors imposing themselves on the "system" (Grácio, 1986, Lima, 1992, 1999; Afonso, 1994).

The State, meanwhile, held itself in *reserve* but *ready* to make a comeback and be reformed (Lima, 1992, p219). Indeed, the administrative system remained almost intact. The ability demonstrated by the Portuguese State to "remain intact throughout a generalized administrative paralysis, for a long time and in the midst of intense social struggles" (Santos, 1990, p33) may even be deemed remarkable.

Political Recentralization (1976-1986)

If education represented one of the sectors in which the self-management experiment first made itself felt, it was also one of the areas in which it quickly became clear that the State was attempting to stage a "comeback". The attempt at *early normalisation* (Lima, 1999, p64) was made mainly through the publication of norms intended to regulate the management of primary (Decree-Law 68/74, November 16) and secondary schools (Decree-law n°735/74, of 21st December).

Although criticized and, to begin with, ignored, these documents nonetheless represent the beginning of a process of reconstruction of the paradigm of political centralization and the transition to a second phase in the democratic management of schools (Lima, 1992, 1999).

This phase, usually designated as the *democratic management of schools,* represents, by virtue of "strategic" omission in the preceding phase, the institutionalisation of a strikingly contradictory SBM model. On the one hand, it formally sanctions respect for the principles of democracy and participation when it speaks of the election and collegiate nature of the governing bodies of schools (board of directors, pedagogic and administrative boards). On the other hand, it strips these bodies of any decision-making power through tight regulations which turn them into the mere executors of directives and policies

decided elsewhere. Therefore schools continue, in essence, to be "local services of the State", deprived of any powers of their own and with scant relations with the local communities (Formosinho, 1989). Education, pedagogy and teacher training thus remain subject to a hyper-centralized administration (Lima, 1999). The instruments of control and assessment have, however, been sufficiently relaxed to allow teachers a certain autonomy within the classroom: non-existence of national examinations (except as an entry requirement for higher education), assessment carried out by teachers and their peers, freedom to choose textbooks, inspection only for administrative purposes. All this notwithstanding, it is common knowledge that these new powers won by teachers in the April Revolution were reduced, in this second phase of the democratic management of schools, "to a markedly insularized authority restricted to the carrying out of rules and regulations from above (...), which in turn ensured the greater supremacy of the Ministry of Education and granted it exclusive powers to govern and direct the system and the schools" (Lima, 1999, p65).

This state of affairs had particularly pernicious effects on primary education, where the old hierarchy was fully reinstated in 1977 (Formosinho & Machado 1999), despite the preservation of the self-management model introduced in 1974, which turned plenary teachers' meetings, designated as the *school board,* into the main body responsible for making internal technical and pedagogic decisions (see Chapter 4). This situation is further aggravated by the fact that the last major reform in primary teaching took place in 1938, that is, when the golden age of the New State was at its height. Changes that have taken place since that time have therefore been "of an implementational nature, occurring above all as the result of adjustments, made frequently, by dispatch (...) [furthering] a sedimentation of orientations, often of a contradictory nature, and thus paving the way for cracks, ambiguities and fragments in the registers of the meaning and conduct of the school order" (Sarmento, 1998a, pp38-39).

The complexity produced by this situation is visible in the almost asphyxiating web of authorities to which primary schools were successively and

cumulatively subjected in the period 1974 to 1998: central departments of the Ministry of Education; school delegations (district structures and specific councils for primary education, which go back to the New State); local authorities (1984); decentralized departments of the Ministry of Education. This network of interlinked administrative bodies has forced schools to liaise with innumerable actors, in a relationship which not infrequently resembles a maze (Sarmento, 1998b) in the sense that it leads to:

- both the relinquishing and the duplication of responsibilities among the various actors;
- autonomous practices, side by side with subordination, produced by the strategic moves arising from such a multiplicity of regulations (Macedo, 1995; Sarmento, 1998a).

The differences between primary and other levels of education are, as we shall see, to become even more marked in the wake of the educational reform of 1986.

Deconcentration

In the mid eighties the centralist model of Portuguese education began to be subject to some dispute. Successive ministries of education publicly advocated a change of paradigm:

> The schools are almost suffocated under an avalanche of circulars saying "do this" or "do that" - irrespective of the kind of school (...) This is *a system which, all the time it continues under central management, it is hopeless to try to reform* (João de Deus Pinheiro, 1985, in Lima, 1995, p58, my emphasis).
>
> What is needed is to reverse the rationale of the system. *Our objective is called school autonomy (...)* (Roberto Carneiro, 1987, in Lima, 1995, p58, my emphasis).

These and other declarations were the driving force behind a process of reform in which there were sometimes clashes between educational interests and political agendas: how to systematize and dovetail the many changes in the

system brought about by the April Revolution; how to extend the processes of participation to new partners; how to modernize and de-bureaucratize the educational system.

It is therefore unsurprising that the Basic Education Law (LBSE, 1986) should have adopted an ambiguous stance on school administration. Indeed, while not denying the possibility of decentralization, the law provided essentially for forms of deconcentration of services (Formosinho *et al*, 2000). As the Law began to be more operationally defined, the modernizing, technocratic agenda took priority over concerns with democratisation and decentralization (Lima, 1995; Dias, 1999):

- the regional education offices are considered to be deconcentrated bodies for the coordination and support the administrative autonomy granted to schools (Decree-Law nº 3/87 of 3rd January);
- the responsibilities attributed to preparatory and secondary schools barely differ from the traditional framework of pedagogic management and cultural activity (Decree-Law nº 43/89);
- the "responsibilities" of local authorities continue to be viewed essentially as "obligations" in the domain of school infra-structures and school facilities (Decree-Law nº 77/84, of 8th March), with no significant shift in terms of decision-making power in education (Fernandes, 1995; Dias, 1999).

An attempt by the Ministry to create a new model of SBM (decree-law nº172/91) was abandoned following a short period of experimentation and evaluation.

In the light of this situation, Lima (1995) seems right when he says that:

> the system's rationale was not *inverted* so much as *reconverted* (...); that it had not been possible to release schools from the bureaucratic pressures of the ministry, but rather that an attempt had been made to release the central departments of the ministry from the executive and operational pressures felt by the schools; and finally that the responsibilities of central government were not *residual* but wholly *essential*" (p67).

Formosinho *et al* (2000) share the same opinion when they classify the eighties as a period of "decentralizing rhetoric and practices of deconcentrated administration" (Formosinho *et al*, 2000, p38). It was essentially a question of modernizing the administration of state schools and initiating a process of transfer of responsibilities with a minimum of political spin-off at local level (Fernandes, 1995; Lima, 1995; Dias, 1999).

It is important to stress, however, that the intended administrative modernisation was not restricted to the sphere of the central administration. Schools too began to be prepared for new professional and managerial ideas[6]. In this preparation four essential aspects should be mentioned:

- the attempt to mobilize school actors for the peripheral execution of central decisions, which was clearly spelled out in the principal slogans of the time ("reform lies with the teachers"; "reform for every school"). This policy of mobilization was accompanied by a certain lauding of diversity in the implementation of these decisions (Lima, 1999);
- the slow but progressive participation of parents in the schools (see Chapter 4);
- the adoption, both in political discourse and in new educational directives, of concepts associated with the new managerialism (school culture, professional management, strong leadership, closer customer relations). The idea of developing "school plans"[7], for example, was sanctioned in legislation concerning the autonomy of preparatory and secondary schools (1989). These schools also had the obligation to develop organisational projects, of a cross-curricular nature (*area -escola).*
- an increasing transfer to schools of responsibility for dealing with disagreement (Lima, 2001), despite the paucity of delegated powers (Afonso, 1999).

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[6] The idea of the school project, for example, was sanctioned in legislation concerning the autonomy of preparatory and secondary schools (1989), as was the obligation to develop a school project of a cross-curricular nature.

[7] "School projects", according the official and unofficial Portuguese language

Primary schools were rather left out of this process, since the legislation on new school responsibilities did not apply to them, and they were therefore not obliged to produce their own educational project. However, they were affected by the same discourse of autonomy and subjected, moreover, to certain of the new managerial requirements: the need to draft school regulations, annual plans of activities and cross -curricular projects (see Chapters 3 & 4).

At the same time we begin to see the emergence of a training structure which, besides the traditional scientific and didactic components, gives increasing emphasis to the so-called transversal and organisational skills: curricular management, school administration and governance, assessment, project methodologies. There was, in particular, considerably increased attention paid to school administration, which cannot but be associated with the managerial and technocratic discourses that began to make themselves felt during this period [8] (Lima, 1997; Formosinho *et al*, 2000).

The relevance of this kind of training to the adoption of the new managerial concepts is recognized by many of those involved in the process:

> I began to realize the importance of this kind of issue [school culture, school project] during a course I did at the School of Education some years ago. And later, of course, when I attended a course in Supervision (Rita, head teacher of Main School).

> On the course I'm doing, all you hear is, 'parents must participate more in the school, parents must come to the school more often'... And when I get to school and see the announcement of yet another parents' meeting, I think, 'Who will they have it in for this time?' (Manuela, associate teacher, Main School).

It became widely accepted that what was needed was specialized training for the carrying out of pedagogic and administrative duties in schools (Formosinho *et al*, 2000). This led to a much greater emphasis on these aspects within teacher training.

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[8] The Community programmes themselves - Prodep, Forgest - stated that their aims were training for school leadership and other duties related to school organisation (Despatch nº 301/ME/92, of 11th November, nº 2, in Formosinho *et al*, 2000, p42).

International support for neo-managerial concepts aided the spread of such ideas in Portugal. Indeed, the training boom witnessed in this country in the closing decades of the twentieth century, as a result of EC funding and tighter regulation of teachers' careers, took place despite the lack of sufficiently qualified researchers and trainers (Lima, 1997). The way was therefore wide open for an uncritical acceptance of these concepts, which depicted school administration as an essentially technical or instrumental area in the service of modernisation policies and rationalization of the educational system (Lima, 1997, p38).

In this way, the Portuguese education system embarked on a road that had already been traversed in other countries:

> Despite delays in relation to other countries, here too educational democratisation and administrative decentralization were progressively disappearing from political norms and discourses, submerged beneath a technocratically inspired and modernizing set of values that appealed to an economic and managerial rationale, and thus shaped an apparently *apolitical and consensual discourse* (Lima, 1999, p64).

Devolution-modernisation: The Formal Sanctioning of School Autonomy (1998)

In spite of the discursive and political importance it had assumed in the eighties and nineties, the principle of school autonomy only achieved full official recognition towards the end of the twentieth century (Decree-Law N° 115/A, 1998). The revival of the issue of school autonomy coincided with the return to power of the socialist party (1996-2002). The "passion for education", trumpeted during the electoral campaign, led to the drafting of the Educational Pact for the Future (1996), which made school autonomy a priority for the development of the country. The initiative also involved the request for the drafting of a prior study for the carrying out of a "programme to consolidate

school autonomy" (Barroso, 1997), which served as the basis for the definition of Decree-Law N°115/A, 1998 (see Appendix).

Therefore the question of state school autonomy was, from the word go, the brainchild of the State and the government, to be put into effect by the Ministry of Education (Afonso, 1999).

The new legislative guidelines revealed, both in the rationale chosen and in the options made, considerable similarities to the neo-managerial models advocated in SBM literature and implemented in other countries (see SBM - a definition). This convergence derived, in the first place, from the fact that the law sanctioned a broad framework of areas in which autonomy could become a reality (strategic, pedagogic, administrative, financial and organisational) while reserving for the central administration the regulation of the process (see Table 3).

Table 3 - Responsibilities of Administration

Transition Phase	First Phase of Autonomy	Second Phase of Autonomy
Approval of internal regulation	**Negotiation of Autonomy Contracts**	***Assessment of Autonomy Contracts (first Phase)**
appreciation of school consortium (educational project pupil trajectories, solutions to problems of isolation)	curriculum management; appreciation of partnerships; non-teaching staff; budget management; specific rules for classes; timetables	***Assessment of the application to the second phase (appreciation of the project, local resources, educational quality, involvement of other partners ...)**

At the same time, the new management model was extremely ambiguous with regard to the *minimum* responsibilities to be handed over to schools. It virtually confined itself to extending to primary education the limited powers enjoyed by the other levels of education in 1989: cultural programmes, the freedom to create "peripheral" curricula locally, and the carrying out of pedagogic and administrative directives. In these circumstances, the negotiation and evaluation of autonomy contracts inevitably proceeded on the basis of an extremely lopsided power relationship between the central administration and the schools - that is, against a background of change in forms of educational regulation[9] rather than a real decentralization of decision-making.

Secondly, some approximation to the new management models was reflected in the increased scope for parental participation in decision-making. At the same time, teacher representation was restricted in such a way as to be no greater than that of other members of the school community (parents, local authorities, representatives of associations, representatives of non-teaching staff). This is where we find, albeit in moderation, a reformulation of relations between "producers" and "consumers" and between "the State" and "civil society" (see Chapter 6).

The new legislative directives presupposed, in addition, a distinct strengthening/broadening of the managerial dimension of school life (see Appendix). This bolstering affected structural (number and responsibilities of management organs; development and sanctioning of middle-management structures), cultural ("educational administration centred on the school") and procedural aspects (school project, school regulations, plans of activities, assessment of school development).

This approximation to the neo-managerial paradigms was further emphasised by a set of provisions which, while not directly associated with the new management model, were established along parallel lines: the institutionalisation of standardised evaluation for all schools (4th year), the curricular reorganization of basic education (more flexible trajectories,

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[9] From direct state rule (state government) to "negotiation" and evaluation

increased managerial responsibilities for each school) and the clarification of "outputs" for students in basic and secondary education.

It should be stressed, however, that although factors were in place for the development of the new managerial concepts, this did not make "school autonomy" necessary and inevitable. Indeed, there were still constraints that might significantly lessen the impact of the new concepts:

- the possibility of financial autonomy was curtailed by the huge proportion of the school budget devoted to staff expenditure (Afonso, 1999);
- management of human resources was limited by the existence of a national system for teacher placement
- the new legislation contains a variety of loopholes that allow the administration to be anything from generous to parsimonious when it comes to the granting of decision-making powers to schools (Dias, 1999; see also Table 3).

Given this scenario, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the new scope for autonomy granted to schools may continue to be, to a great extent, residual. It is in this context that a study centred on "the context of practice" assumes particular relevance. Since this analysis is the subject of Parts II and III of this research, it now remains for me to try to interpret the meaning of the changes that have taken place, at the *formal level,* in the governance of Portuguese state schools (1974 -2002).

The socio-historical approach adopted would suggest the existence of distinct phases in the recent evolution of school administration in Portugal. In a first phase, which occurred essentially between 1974 and 1986, policy decisions on these issues seem to have been motivated mainly by internal factors of the following type:

- the participatory explosion that accompanied the April Revolution allowing for the development of self-governing management styles in Portuguese schools (1974-1976);

- the subsequent "political normalisation" that implied a return to the centralist matrix of the Portuguese education system (1976-1986).

What stands out during this period, despite changes in the political situation and managerial logics, is a certain continuity in terms of "the school management structure", "the shortage of school managers with proper social status", and "the peripheral nature of community participation" (Afonso, 1999, p.61). The margin of teacher autonomy at this time, though residual, should not be discounted. It constitutes, after all, "the basis of teacher professionalism", (Afonso, 1999). It includes the choice of textbooks and supplementary materials, group/class composition, pedagogic management and control of teacher and pupil evaluation processes (see Part II). It is further strengthened by the non-existence of an external evaluation system, by the loss of power of the inspection structure that followed in the wake of the Revolution, and by the very unwieldiness and ultra-regulation of the system.

From the mid eighties there are signs of an increasing convergence between political discourses and educational directives, compared with trends towards "devolution" taking place in the central countries. This convergence seems further to have increased with the recent drafting of a new system of administration for primary and secondary schools (1998).These moments may therefore signal new phases in the course of the history of Portuguese public administration. Among the most striking indications of change are: the gradual support for the professionalization of school management; the increasing importance attached to middle-management structures; the valorisation of the organisational dimension of the school; the introduction of managerial instruments of a neo-managerial cast ("school project", external evaluation); the appeal for closer ties with civil society and the labour market, and the adoption of a policy discourse in which technocratic concerns (modernisation, flexibility, evaluation) replace democratic preoccupations (equality of access, success and participation).

CHAPTER TWO
METHODOLOGY

The educational agenda of recent decades has been characterized by ongoing waves of reform (Glatter, 1999). This scenario has acted as a catalyst for the development of policy studies (Halpin, 1994; Walford, 1994) and, especially, for the appearance of a range of research studies which try to "break ranks both with empiricist accounts of educational policy and with those which rest upon managerialist perspectives on the policy process" (Troyna, 1994, p3). In this Chapter I will describe the main steps involved in my own personal attempt to make a contribution in this field: section 1 describes the antecedents, focus and strategies of inquiry of the study; section 2 discusses the main aspects of the research plan; section 3 summarizes the procedures used for data collection and analysis and section 4 presents a description of the schools where the field work was conducted.

The Research Boundaries: Antecedents, Structure and Methodology

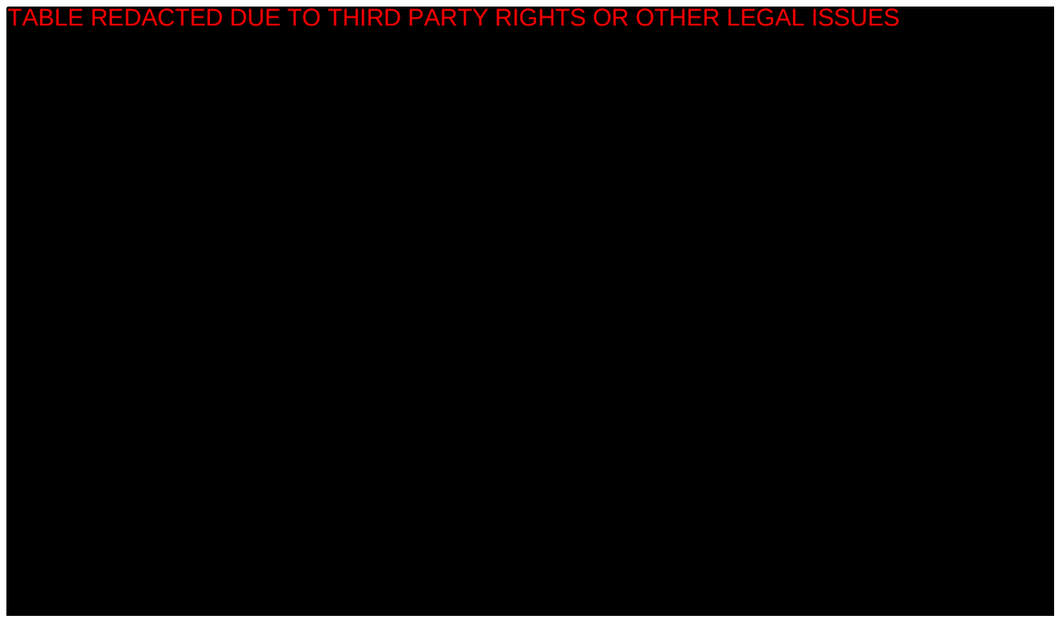
Antecedents and Reasons for the Study: "If you don't know, why do you ask?"

Some authors maintain that it is impossible to pinpoint the precise moment at which a research project begins, given all the complex factors that influence the researcher's commitment to a particular area of study: backgrounding, acquaintance with the field, personal values and interests (Stake, 1995; Santos *et al*, 2001). This view aptly describes the way in which the present research began to take shape. The democratization of education has been a recurrent theme in my work over a long period (see Dias, 1985; Davies *et al*, 1989; Carvalho & Dias, 1993; Santos & Dias, 1993; Dias, 1999). Moreover, being a teacher of educational sociology and school administration in Portugal, I was constantly confronted with the fact that the process of political democratization in my country (1974)

has not been accompanied by a comparable process of social and educational democratization nor by an equalization of educational opportunities (see Table 4).

Table 4 — Primary School Non-Achievement Rate

(according to parents' socio-professional category)



(Source: ME/GEP, 1991)

Furthermore, I witnessed with particular concern the growing assertion of neo-managerial and neo-liberal concepts in Portuguese political life in the closing decades of the 20th century. Indeed, my regular professional contacts with Portuguese schools raised my awareness of the risks of (increased) social differentiation that seemed to come in the wake of the new educational policies arising from neo-liberalism and neo-managerialism. In particular evidence in Portugal were the effects of the participation of middle class parents in what I came to term 'the selective modernisation of primary schooling": legitimate or camouflaged practices in the choice of school; the creation of logistic, recreational and cultural structures in a restricted number of state schools; increasing curricular differentiation between "rich" and "poor" schools [1].

[1] noticeable particularly in the field of extra-curricular activities and new curricular guidelines (see Conclusions).

The idea of carrying out research on these issues was bolstered by the publication in 1998 of a new management model for Portuguese schools (Decree-Law n º 115/A), which included many of the basic principles of SBM and which was based on a political discourse that tended to dilute the constitutional responsibilities of the State with regard to the democratization and quality of state schooling in Portugal (see Dias, 1999).

The oblivion to which Southern European countries have been consigned in the contemporary debate over school governance, despite their undeniable idiosyncrasies in the field of the Welfare State and the development of mass schooling, helped to strengthen my decision to make the issue of "devolution" the central theme of my doctoral thesis.
For all these reasons, this research is devoted to an analysis of the local management of education in Portugal and the changes associated with the implementation of a new SBM model in Portuguese schools (1998-2002).

Structure of the Research: Strategies of Inquiry and Main Phases

Conceptual Structure

The design of all research projects, including the qualitative ones, requires conceptual organisation (Stake, 1995). It should therefore be mentioned that the point of departure of the present study was the concept of policy cycle, outlined by Bowe *et al* (1992):

> We envisage three primary policy contexts, each context consisting of a number of arenas of action, some public, and some private. The first context, the *context of influence*, is where public policy is normally initiated. It is here that policy discourses are constructed. It is here that parties struggle to influence the definition and social purposes of education, what it means to be educated (...)
> This context of influence has a symbiotic but none the less uneasy relation to the second context, the *context of policy text production*. Because while influence is often related to the

> articulation of narrow interests and dogmatic ideologies, policy texts are normally articulated in the language of the general public good (...)
> Policies then are textual interventions but they also carry with them material constraints and possibilities. The responses to these texts have "real" consequences: The consequences are experienced within the third context, the *context of practice* (Bowe *et al*, 1992, pp19-20).

This conceptualisation of policy argues that educational policies are not merely *texts (a* particular "law", document or set of formal guidelines)[2]. They are also *processes, discourses and outcomes.* A similar view is presented by Taylor *et al* (1997), when they affirm that it is necessary "to understand both the background and context of policies, including their historical antecedents and relations with other texts, and the shorter and longer term impact of policies in practice" (p47).

It should be underlined that these distinctions also presuppose non-linear relationships between structure and agency and between the various "fields" implicated in the implementation of a particular policy decision (e.g. the educational field, the administrative field, the "civil society" field). In fact, "[policy] analysis requires an understanding that is based not on constraint *or* agency but on the changing relationship between constraint *and* agency and their inter-penetration" (Ball, 1994, p21; italics in the original). This inter-penetration presupposes bringing together the "micro" and "macro" levels of investigation (Ozga, 1990). This research therefore takes as its principal reference those studies that have attempted to relate, from a critical and ethnographic perspective, large-scale changes in contemporary societies to the processes of organisational and cultural restructuring of state schools.
The difficulties inherent in this enterprise have been most effectively summed up by the following authors:

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[2] It may even be the case, as we shall see in this study, that some *texts* are not even read first hand (Ball, 1994).

- the existence of "theoretically crude cross -national policy analysis which make facile juxtapositions between policies developed in different national contexts" (Halpin & Troyna 1994, p203);
- the influential "power discourses " that structure the field of school administration (Cookson, 1994);
- the trend towards both "disciplinary parochialism " and excessive eclecticism in the approach to contemporary educational policies (Dale, 1992; Halpin & Troyna 1994).

The risks attendant on this research area, aggravated by the limited resources available, led me to limit the scope of my study. In this way, I decided to focus it mainly on the analysis of the "context of practice", all the while bearing in mind the multifaceted nature of the impact of the reforms:

> there is an important distinction to be made in regard to [reform] effects, a distinction between what might be called first order and second order effects. First order effects are changes in practice or structure (which are evident in particular sites and across the system), and second order effects are the impact of these changes on patterns of social access, opportunity and social justice (Ball, ppp25-26).

Research Focus

The importance given in this research to the impact of devolution policies derived, to a great extent, from the very objectives of the research:

- to identify the organisational, professional, social, cultural and political transformations undergone in Portuguese primary schools at the turn of the 20th century (1998-2002)
- to clarify the influence of neo-managerial perspectives in societies, such as the Portuguese, which differ considerably from the more developed countries (see Chapter 1).

The option was also closely linked with the diversity of interpretations to which the impact of the devolution policies has given rise in the scientific community:

> Most advocates of choice and school autonomy base their support on claims that competition will enhance the efficiency

> and responsiveness of the schools and thus increase their effectiveness (...) while others see them as a way of giving disadvantaged children the sorts of opportunities hitherto given only to those who can afford to buy them thorough private schooling (...) my own reading of the evidence suggests that there is little hope of such dreams being realised in the absence of broader policies that challenge deeper social and cultural inequality (Whitty, 2002, p11).

The interpretational conflicts in this domain are not restricted to the social impact of the devolution policies. The very process of professional and organisational restructuring of the schools has provoked contradictory readings. Thus, certain authors question the expected changes in these areas, due to the marked disparity between the "means" employed (organisational) and the outcomes envisaged (professional and pedagogic). These reservations are exacerbated when the issue is raised of the "globalisation" of devolution policies.

> In these [school choice and diversity] and other areas there has been a clear tendency towards convergence across a range of states in general discourse and broad objectives of education policy. However, there is less evidence of convergence in the details of policy and in the actual structures and processes in different countries (Green, 1999, p60).

In other words, it is necessary to be aware of the extent to which local administrative traditions and cultures of practice tend to "frame", temper and refract such global policy discourses. Given this, it seemed to me of particular relevance to highlight, in this research, the main features and "policy effects"of the new model of governance of Portuguese State schools (Decree-law Nº115/A, 1998).

It seemed to me equally relevant that the fieldwork be conducted in primary education. In fact, this level of schooling undoubtedly constitutes the principal locus of political and administrative dependence to be identified within the Portuguese educational system (Sarmento, 1998, 2002; Formosinho *et al*, 2000). The extent to which it may or may not take on board the new political directives

regarding school governance will therefore be a powerful indicator of the breadth and depth of these innovations.

Strategies of Inquiry and Research Structure

The roots: critical theory and critical ethnography

Any research procedure involves a wide variety of epistemological, ontological, methodological and procedural options (Silva, 2001). This study takes its main inspiration from the field of critical theory and critical ethnography and, within this field, from those studies that sought to analyse the impact of devolution policies in school settings (see especially Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Vincent, 1996; 2001; Menter *et al*, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1997; Woods *et al*, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Arnott and Raab, 2000; Gewirtz, 2001, 2002; Van Zanten, 2002).

While critical theory does not constitute a unified theoretical and epistemological corpus, it does take for granted a relatively wide set of shared assumptions:

> that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of experience or removed from some sort of ideological inscription; (...) that certain groups in any society are privileged over others (...) that oppression has many faces (...) that mainstream research practices are generally, although mostly unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender oppression (McLaren, 2000 pp139-140).

In this sense, the aspiration to neutrality and objectivity that is a feature of the positivist tradition has been considered by various authors as a way of disregarding the reflexivity and knowledge of ordinary actors (Silva, 2001; Caria, 1999, 2000).

This being the case, the ethnographic perspective behind this research may be taken as a *method* rather than a simple research *technique*[3]. Indeed it is the viewpoint, rather than the techniques employed that gives a study its interpretative matrix:

> What makes such work interpretative or qualitative is a matter of substantive focus and intent, rather than of procedure of data collection, that is, a research technique does not constitute a research method (Erickson, 1996, quoted in Silva, 2001, p266).

However, the attention give in this research to the ethnographic method does not derive exclusively from the epistemological and theoretical premises underlying the study. It derives, also, to a great extent, from the very objectives of the research. Indeed, it would be difficult either to embark upon an analysis of the impact of devolution policies in Portuguese primary schools (first and second order effects of the reform) or to evaluate the influence of neo-managerial concepts in Portuguese state schools, without having recourse to the ethnographic method. Ethnography, in fact, provides ideal access to "situated discourses", "specific tactics" and "precise and tenuous power relations operating in local settings" (Ball, 1994, p2). It also constitutes a method that lends itself to reflection on the technocratic and instrumental nature of the new management concepts. "From critical theory, [critical ethnographers] inherit a forceful criticism of the positivist conception of science and instrumental rationality (Mc Laren, 2000, p140).

In addition, ethnography is often about the "power - knowledge" relations in social settings, about giving voice to the unheard (Ball, 1994). Those with the least to gain from policy devolution - teachers and socially disadvantaged families - also constituted a major incentive to carry out this study. Indeed, it was a pivotal concern of the research objectives to clarify the impact of the new

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[3] Indeed, even when developed along the lines of other theoretical frameworks, ethnographic and interpretative perspectives can hardly be seen as mere technical options for the gathering of data. By conceding the essentially social nature of the research process, and rejecting a rigid compartmentalisation of facts and meanings, these perspectives move onto an eminently epistemological plane.

SBM models on patterns of school access, local participation and social justice in Portugal.

Finally, I should explain that, in spite of the ethnographic roots and the use of ethnographic methods in my study, this research is not an "ethnography" in the classical sense of the term, i.e. an in-depth, long-term, participant observation of a single social setting , culture or group. Rather, it is a qualitative "collective case study" that , as I describe on pp. 75 ,76 and 77 , includes several different social settings and groups (parents, teachers, headteachers) . However , the conduct of my field work as well as in the analysis of the data and writing up of the dissertation does follow ethnographic procedures. Indeed, as is the case in ethnographic studies, I was the main research "instrument" of the study and I developed a "research design" involving a lengthy period of direct observations. I followed the everyday life of the schools under analysis for about three years , observing events and attending meetings, shadowing key actors, listening and asking questions, collecting documents, in order to throw light on the issues at the centre of the research. I built relationships with members of the communities to gain access to the most subtle elements of the culture, social relations and micropolitical activity. These relations were developed within a framework of personal and professional "respect" and "appreciation ". I also paid a great deal of attention to the individual actors' (and groups') perspectives and their interpretations of their world.

In analytical terms I refused the positivist appeal to the "discovery " of universal laws and instead, tried , through "thick descriptions ","to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular settings come to understand , to account for , to take action and otherwise manage their day -to -day situation" (Van Maanen ,1979, quoted in Miles &Huberman , 1994 ,p8).

In summary , while what follows is not 'an ethnography' as such, it does sit firmly within the tradition of qualitative research which draws on and uses ethnographic procedures, strives for "a holistic perspective" and "emic, etic, and non-judgmental views of reality" (Fetterman, 1998, p. 18).

Research Phases

Educational literature produced prior to the devolution policies offers contradictory images of primary schools as workplaces (Menter *et al*, 1997). Thus, while some studies portray this level of education as the *locus par excellence* of collaboration cultures, others denounce their "eggcrate" structure (see Lortie, 1975; Nias *et al*, 1989; Bush, 1997; Canário *et al*, 1997; Sarmento, 2000, Dias, 2002). This dichotomous and somewhat "schizophrenic" image of primary teaching constitutes a serious obstacle to any analysis of devolution policies. Indeed, in the absence of a minimally consistent frame of reference concerning the dynamics of primary schools during the phase prior to the reform, namely regarding the connections that would necessarily exist between the "traditional" and the "innovative" schools, the "changes" produced by the new managerial directives can only be substantiated on the basis of an *imaginary* antecedent. This imaginary antecedent may either be visualised as the "golden age" of professional autonomy and "service" ethic or, in the case of contemporary management perspectives, as the "dark age" of producer capture and bureaucratic inflexibility[4]. Given this situation, it seemed to be appropriate to divide my study into two main phases.

In the first phase, I would attempt to identify the main professional, organisational and political features of Portuguese primary schools during the final phase of *democratic management* (that is, the period immediately prior to the ratification of the new management model). Such a description would allow me to avail myself of a relatively trustworthy base of comparative references for subsequent study (a description of the impact of the "reform"). It would allow me, to evaluate the educational, organisational and social outcomes of the political reorientation that began to take shape in Portugal in the mid-eighties in the sphere of school administration (see Chapter 1). Indeed, research carried out

[4] In these circumstances, as pointed out by Menter *et al*, the very sanctioning of the new directives becomes a virtually indisputable political imperative. Indeed, it seems as natural to build collegiality in the "flat structures" of primary schools as to break down their professional isolation through teamwork (Menter *et al*, 1997).

in other countries has emphasised the fact that the transition from bureau-professional to neo-managerial regimes usually involves different stages (see Robertson, 1996).

The second phase of the study would be devoted to the description and analysis of the changes associated with the new regime of school autonomy in Portugal (Decree-law 115-A /98 and subsequent legislation). In line with the aims of the research, I would therefore attempt to pinpoint the main "first and second order" effects of the reform (Ball, 1994). I would then try to "evaluate" the *principal* outcomes of these changes: either paradigmatic convergence with neo-managerialist doctrines or "evolution in continuity" with regard to the centralising matrix of the Portuguese education system.

The Research Plan

The decisions involved in the field work are more than just a question of defining research strategies. The carrying out of any study requires several further decisions: the "research design", the definition of the sample; the negotiation of access and of the role of the researcher (especially in qualitative studies); and the identification of the main issues or themes of the research. While it is virtually impossible to elaborate on all these considerations in detail, I shall attempt, in this section, to give a concise outline of the procedures adopted in the course of the research.

A Collective Case Study

Research studies may take different forms. This study, as far as the "research design" is concerned, may be considered a (qualitative) collective case study (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Stake, 1995). Indeed, the central issue of this

research, together with its particular methodological approach, led me to consider the view that the use of case studies would be the best way of gaining access to the "uniqueness and the commonality"[5] of Portuguese primary schools:

- qualitative studies may be distinguished by their emphasis on holistic analysis of cases or phenomena (Stake, 1995).
- research in the domain of SBM has shown that the process of organisational change may depend on a large number of school variables (history, "ethos", leadership, students and parents' background)[6].

The data collection involved six schools. It is not, however, a question of six different case studies. Indeed, the type of work carried out comes within what Stake defined as a *collective (instrumental) case study:*

> [Sometimes] we need to know about a particular case. Here we have an intrinsic interest in the case, and we may call our work an *intrinsic case study.* In a different situation we will have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding (...) This use of the case is to understand something else. Case study here is instrumental to accomplish something other than understanding this particular [case], and we may call our inquiry *instrumental case study* (Stake, 1995, p3) .
>
> Researchers may study a number of cases jointly in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population or general condition. We might call it collective case study. It is not a study of a collective but an instrumental study extended to several cases (Stake, 1994, p237).

The choice of the different research venues (schools) was made bearing in mind some of the variables shown by previous research to be important for an analysis of SBM[7]. These, however, were not taken into consideration for the purpose of guaranteeing the representativeness of the study; given the nature of the investigation, it was above all an attempt to give credence to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question.

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[5] Stake, 1995, p1

[6] see Bowe *et al*, 1992, Osborn *et al*, 2002

[7] urban context; sociological composition of the school population; size and history of the school (see research field).

The selection of "cases"

Research into devolution policies has indicated that it is in urban areas that the issues central to the new management concepts assume greater importance (e.g. parent choice). I therefore decided to conduct my study in Lisbon, which is currently my place of residence.

Having taken this first decision, it was then necessary to reflect upon the organisational and sociological features of the schools that seemed best suited to be part of my "collective case study".

Given that the issue of equality of educational opportunity is pivotal in the controversy surrounding devolution policies, the inclusion of a range of socially and demographically different, schools became virtually inevitable (see Table 4). I therefore decided initially to bring together, in my study, one school with a predominantly middle and upper-middle class population (less than 10% disadvantaged pupils) and located in a neighbourhood with similar features); one school with a fairly disparate social mix, albeit with a considerable proportion of underprivileged pupils (between 30 and 50%); and one school in which disadvantaged pupils represented the only significant social class (over 90%).

I was also persuaded that the schools to be selected should be of different sizes. Two factors influenced this decision:

- the publication of a recent study on Portuguese primary education that showed that this variable had a bearing on the configuration of certain organisational dynamics (Borges *et al*, 1998).
- Portuguese legislation, which makes a considerable number of organisational aspects dependent on the size of the school (exemption of the headteacher from contact hours, constitution of school groupings etc.).

Given that a considerable number of schools fitted these criteria, I approached, with the aid of a study mentioned earlier in which I participated in a consultant capacity (Borges *et al*, 1998), those schools which seemed most likely to

"represent" the characteristic and issues I was hoping to study[8]. Thus it was that I selected the schools that I came to designate as Main School, Park School and Avenue School.

It was my intention that this "sample" should serve as the basis for both phases of the study. However, the long delay in the implementation of the new management model in schools with fewer than 300 pupils (small and medium in size), which particularly affected the greater Lisbon area, rendered this version of my project impracticable. Neither Park School nor Avenue School made the transition to the new management model within the established time-frame (school year 1999/2000). It was therefore essential to extend the initial sample to include a further three new schools in the second phase of the study (see Table 5).

Table 5 - Research Sample

School Features / Research Phases	Large school /middle class	Medium school / Deprived Students	Small school /Deprived	Large school /Deprived
First phase	Main School	Park School	Avenue School	
Second phase	Main School Pessoa School		Magalhães School	Gama School

The schools will be described in detail in the last section of this chapter. The description include details on the history of the school/neighbourhood, number of teachers and pupils, teacher mobility, "leadership", departments and projects.

[8] that is, those which did not present, either at the organisational level (measured by the level of teacher) or at the pedagogic level (measured by the attitudes of teachers and pupils towards the

Negotiating Access

Since this was the first qualitative study I had undertaken, and since its execution involved a prolonged period of field work (three or four years), I was initially much concerned with the question of access to research locales. I therefore attempted to devise a "strategy" for negotiating access that would enable me to minimise the risks inherent therein. This strategy consisted of two basic procedures. First, I endeavoured to obtain the "meaningful" consent of all those who would be affected by the research. To this end, I invested considerable time and effort in a relatively complex procedure for gaining access. Apart from the normal personal and telephone contacts with the school management, to explain the objectives of the research, I also requested the permission of all the individual actors I intended to involve (parents, teachers, head teachers, ancillary staff). It was not merely a question of a formal request, although this was also made. I made a point of attending meetings of the various organs of the school, to present the project, explain the kind of cooperation I needed, and take any questions. I also requested that the decision regarding the school's participation in the project should not be taken in my presence, as this might have influenced the discussion and the outcome. Although this involved a lengthy process, and increased the risk of refusal, it offered, in my opinion, various advantages. In the first instance, it prevented the study from being seen as a result of a decision taken unilaterally by any one sector of the school (management, teachers or parents)[9]. Secondly, it reduced the risk of the researcher role being confused with that of an institutional evaluator[10]. In addition, it seemed to me essential to negotiate an *informed* consent, given the theoretical (critical sociology) and methodological (ethnography) assumptions underlying the research.

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participation of the latter) significant differences when compared to others schools of similar size and sociological composition.

[9] This risk could cause serious problems to the research development, due to the expected period of turmoil related with the new policies.

[10] this was one of the points I emphasised in my presentation.

Areas of Analysis

The definition of the main theme of this research, derived from a review of the literature that informed it and my own concerns and interests, made it possible to establish certain boundaries for the carrying out of the study, namely to identify areas of potential "convergence" between countries in the domain of devolution policies (see Chapter 1). This is, moreover, the function of theory in qualitative studies:

> in qualitative inquiry the theory is used to focus the inquiry and give it boundaries for comparison in facilitating the development of the theoretical or conceptual outcomes. The theory or concept of interest may be considered a conceptual template with which to compare and contrast results, rather than to use as a priori categories into which to force the analysis (Morse, 1994, p223).

In fact, it was the empirical research, together with the dynamics of the actual reform process, that made it possible to transform these naturally very broad and diffuse boundaries into areas of effective study. There thus emerged, in the course of the research, four main areas of analysis:

Teachers' identity, conceptions of professionalism and working conditions

In this area, consideration was given to changes relating to the professional ethic and identity matrix of the teachers ("bureau-professionalism", "new professionalism", "market ethic"); to patterns of collegiality in primary schools (restricted and extended professionalism, autonomy versus constraint); to the intensification and supervision of teachers' work; and to the school hierarchies (see, especially, Chapters 4 & 6).

Headteachers' roles and responsibilities

In this area issues were analysed relating to the change in the duties of school executives, to the role of the headteacher in the implementation of the new SBM model, to the differentiation in duties and status between managers and

teachers, and to the profusion of forms of middle management in primary schools. Particular attention was paid, in line with the objectives of the research, to the role played by school managers in the internalising of neo-managerial regimes (see, especially, Chapters 4 & 5).

Parental and community participation in schools

This area was dedicated to aspects associated with the different models of parental involvement and participation in the schools, with the blurring of the frontiers between the public and private sectors, with the role of local government in school management, and with the impact of devolution policies on the democratisation of Portuguese primary teaching (in terms of equality of access, achievement and participation).

Patterns of interaction between the central administration and the schools

This area essentially involved consideration of the issues of (re)centralisation and decentralisation of decisions and changes in forms of governance and control of education. Also analysed was the role played by the central administration in the implementation of the new SBM model and the model of participation by local actors which prevailed throughout the transition from "democratic management" to "school autonomy" in Portugal.

The concepts and perspectives pivotal to the treatment of these areas of analysis are summarised at the beginning of each chapter (see Parts 2 & 3 of this thesis) and, where applicable, amplified in the course of same. It was not intended, however, as has already been mentioned, that these summaries should constitute a "script" for empirical research. The intention was purely to contextualise and provide a comparative base for the research.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The carrying out of a qualitative study involves complex processes of selection of events, building relations, finding informants and contexts; and these only fall into a definite pattern as the research itself evolves. Researchers have constantly to make decisions as to when, where, what and whom they should observe (Burgess, 1997). In this section I shall consider some of these processes, the role(s) I played in the course of the research and the methods I used for gathering and then analysing the data.

The early months of observation: immersion and "submersion"

My experience as a sociologist alerted me to the complexity of fieldwork, given the multifaceted nature of any social situation: space, actors, activities, objects, timings, events, feelings (Spradley, 1980). The strategy defined for gaining access allowed me some initial limitation of the "field", especially in terms of the spaces and activities "available" for observation (plenary meetings, head teachers' office, group activities). But in spite of this delimitation, I still had great difficulty in the early months in focusing the research. I took copious notes about everything, especially the meetings I attended: I made plans of the rooms, plotting how the actors arranged themselves at each meeting; I collected agendas; I documented controversies and dramas; I timed the meetings and the discussions of each topic; I described interactions, means of disseminating information and the way decisions were made. It was a fascinating time, but excessively time-consuming. I was excited about the observation, and stayed on in the schools far longer than I intended (in the sense of striking a balance between observation, registration and reflection). As a result, I would stay up until late into the night, scribbling my fieldnotes almost compulsively. Even when patterns began to repeat themselves, I would still write everything down.

However, in the end this time was not wasted: I realize now that a major part of the material that enabled me to reflect on the "identity" of Portuguese schools was the result of ideas that came to me during this period. The almost exclusive role of observer that I assumed at the time helped to put the teachers at ease in my company and to make them feel that I belonged. I for my part, albeit slowly, gained confidence in my role as "ethnographer" and adopted a more reflective attitude towards the carrying out of the research.

Choice of Research contexts

The choice of cases to include in the current research was made, as I mentioned above, in the light the research goals. The choice of actual research locales, however, goes far beyond the constitution of the study sample. Schools are complex institutions, comprising many formal and informal "subdivisions", and this makes the choice of contexts for institutional observation something which can have a decisive influence on the gathering of data (Strauss *et al*, 1964; Hammersley, 1981).

The criteria chosen for the negotiation of access and the technical management of the research led me, as already indicated, to favour the observation of meetings and other group activities. I then gradually extended my field of observation to the teachers' room, director's office, "Board of parents" meetings and informal meeting places for teachers (corridors, dingy areas in the case of the P3 schools, entrances and exits). As the research progressed, and taking care not to neglect the analysis of other contexts (see Chapter 4, "human relations"), I eventually focused my attention on the director's office and on meetings of the various organs of the school (including the parents' association and organs of middle management). This choice was made both as a result of theoretical questions relating to the issue of neo-managerialism (see Chapter 1) and of the marked segmentation identified in the first phase of the research (see Chapter 3).

In spite of the fact that from the first year of the research I had been given virtually unlimited access to the director's office, especially at Main School, I

made a point of not being present at meetings between the director and parents when it seemed that delicate personal matters or educational conflicts were under discussion. In these cases I chose, on a later occasion, to conduct short interviews with those involved. I tried in this way to strike a balance between accessibility and intrusion, two of the principles which should always inform the choice of social situations for research (Spradley, 1981).

It should be stressed that, although the objects of analysis were to all intents and purposes the same in the different schools, the actual physical features of these schools, as also their different practices, determined literally the perspective of observation. For example, the "open space" design of Main School, unlike other schools, meant that an excellent vantage point was afforded by the area adjoining the director's office[11]. Moreover, in the smaller schools, where the head teacher also had a full teaching timetable, the director's office played a relatively minor role. Where it existed, it might be used as a staffroom (Avenue School) or special resources room (Magalhães School) or given over to the head teacher's own classroom (Park School). The selection of research locales is therefore more complex than it might at first appear. Furthermore, as Burgess (1997), points out, one rarely finds a school that combines simplicity, accessibility and non-intrusion. In the current research, I was particularly aware of the issue of non-intrusion. For example, it was impossible to tell in advance when a conversation between a director and parents or teachers would develop into a serious argument or turn to intimate family matters.

The Role of Researcher and the Handling of Relations

The role of the researcher in field work has been variously described: active or passive; overt or covert; participant or observer (see Burgess, 1997). It was my intention to adopt a stance roughly halfway between observer and participant,

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[11] In some cases I managed to find alternatives, like the open-air patio of Magalhães School, or the ante-room in Pessoa School (which doubled as the Teachers' Room), from which to gain a broader view.

with the emphasis on the former. This choice was made for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it would be difficult to play the role of participant, given that I was not a qualified primary teacher, and voluntary work is not common in Portuguese primary schools. Second, I considered I had insufficient experience in the domain of field research to play the parts, simultaneously and in a variety of situations, of both researcher and participant.

Finally, the role of observer-participant seemed to me the best suited to the objectives and methodology of the research.

While my procedure was largely consistent with the role I had chosen, I was obliged on occasion to recognize what some authors had already pointed out, namely that different roles are assumed at different phases of the research. For example, some meetings were tape recorded for me by teachers when I was away in London and, once a certain relationship had been established with local actors, I began receiving telephone calls telling me about unscheduled activities which they thought might be of interest for the research (in this way the "objects" of my study took the role of co-authors). Furthermore, school managers would often take me into their confidence concerning the "dramas" that occurred in their schools, suggesting in some cases that this helped them to (re)think their strategy. From this perspective, even in the role of listener, I became a participant. This even occurred in certain interviews, in which teachers would make comments such as, "That's funny - I'd never thought of that before" or "It's only now that I realize we've been evaluating our pupils on the basis of the previous year's school project".

There were times, especially during the difficult phase experienced by some managers and teachers during the transition from the old to the new model, when I was confronted with serious ethical problems arising from my role as listener. It was difficult to draw a clear line between what was said in confidence, as a result of a period of great personal and professional insecurity[12], and what constituted part of the research. It was also difficult to

[12] Besides the professional problems mentioned in the second phase of the research, Rita also had to deal with serious health problems and the death of her husband.

remain silent when people shared with me plans for action that seemed likely to me to aggravate existing problems.

It was with regard to the handling of these relations and situations that the field diary was invaluable throughout the research (apart from helping me to overcome my initial diffidence in contacting the schools and in defining the actual areas of analysis).

Conduct of interviews and selection of informants

The interviews

The conducting of the interviews represented an important turning point in the research. In the first place it allowed me to gain a far deeper insight into the universe inhabited by the actors in the study (teachers, managers, parents). And this is one of the main purposes underlying interpretative studies: "the main aims of participant observers revolve around giving meaning to the universe they are studying through the perspective of those that are being studied" (Denzin, 1989, quoted in Vasconcelos, 2000, p189). Secondly, it was above all after conducting the interviews that I felt that "entry" into the schools had given way to "access" (see Ball, 1990). Indeed, as the teachers were interviewed, so they clearly became much more comfortable with the social relationship that had been created, and even played a significant role in the research itself: they warned me of alterations to the dates of regular events, or told me about incidents I had not witnessed myself.

This change in the teachers' attitudes, although indissolubly linked with the social nature of the interviews themselves, would also seem to be the result of being helped to see the object of the research in a fresh light. Indeed, teachers would often begin their interview with the opening gambit "I really don't know much about this management business". The realization that management, in this case, referred to their daily practices in the school, rather than to the red tape to which they were accustomed, greatly enhanced their self-confidence. The lengthy period of observation prior to the interviews also contributed decisively to their successful outcome. Indeed, my role as empathic listener was

not merely a pose. Having observed the world of parents, teachers and managers, I was genuinely keen to gain a deeper understanding of issues relating to this universe. The importance I attached to the interviews led me to avoid booking "meetings" for times when the teachers were tired (breaks, lunchtime) or that might clash with other activities (times for receiving parents; the interval prior to meetings; periods when pupils were working on their own). Although this decision obliged me to make extra visits to the schools, this practice paid "dividends". Indeed, since the interviews were of an ethnographic nature, mutual availability was essential.

Technically speaking, I observed the normal procedures for conducting interviews: I negotiated times (average length 1hr. 30mins); venues (almost always classrooms outside teaching hours) and ways of documenting the event (audio recordings, except in two cases). I explained the purpose of the interview and guaranteed complete confidentiality. I never used a script, although my opening questions invariably followed the same pattern (How many years have you been a teacher/manager? What made you choose this profession?; Why did you apply to this particular school?). These questions were essentially aimed at putting the interviewees at their ease.

From this point, the interview would essentially turn into a conversation focusing on the research objectives and issues that had emerged during the initial process of observation and data analysis (such as teachers' identity and conceptions of professionalism, patterns of "collegiality" among teachers, headteachers' role, parental involvement; see *research areas*). Added to these questions, in the second phase of the research, were issues related to the implementation of the new management model (information, forms and level of participation, policy effects).

Selection of Informants

The selection of informants, which had initially been one of my chief concerns, actually turned out to be easier than I had anticipated. The great mobility of teachers in Portuguese schools made the whole selection process almost

automatic: few teachers remained in schools during the whole period of the research. Nonetheless, I made a point, each academic year, of interviewing some of the teachers who were new to the schools included in the sample. Above all, I was careful not to lose sight of the various sensibilities to be found in the schools. Maybe as a result of this, I rarely felt in the course of the interviews that the interviewees were withholding information (either for fear that I would be judgmental or because of my relationship with other groups). There was only one teacher who declined to grant me an "interview" (recording or notes), although she had revealed her thoughts on a variety of topics in "conversation".

Data Analysis

Because the field work was conducted over more than three years - from the beginning of 1999 until March 2002 - I was able to gather an extremely large number of interviews and records (see Table 6).

Table 6 - Field work

	Main School	Park School	Avenue School	Pessoa School	Gama School	Magalhães School	Total
Interviews (teachers)	46	12	3	18	21	5	105
Interviews headteachers and deputy heads	12	4	2	4	6	3	23
Formal* Meetings	32**	9	3	14	8	6	72

* note including parents' meetings

**the differences in the number of meetings reflect both the school dynamics and the duration of the research (higher in Main school since the school belonged to both phases of the research)

The fact that the project was partially subsidized served to lighten the administrative tasks associated with the research (transcription of interviews, typing of field notes, acquisition of the Nud'ist programme to ease the process of data analysis, cost of translation). I was thus able to concentrate on the organisation and analysis of the data gathered.

My initial approach to the texts and contexts, although not totally by intention, coincides to a certain extent with some of the postulates of "interpretativism" (Miles & Huberman, 1994): quest for a deep understanding of group actions and interactions, slow condensing of field notes, continued readings of the source material. Indeed, contrary to some authors who, already in the early stages of research, are able to conduct initial processes of codification (see Vasconcelos, 1997), I relied for a long time on the "integrity" of my records. The paucity of ethnographic research on primary education in Portugal led me to "put off" the process of coding, in the hope of ensuring meanwhile that the material on which I would be basing this coding would have a certain "representativeness". Moreover, even in the very advanced stages of the research, I would frequently go back to my documents, especially the interviews, for inspiration and "confirmation" of hypotheses and inferences (which is why the interviews are a vital part of my references).

The methods used for data analysis were those suggested for this kind of study: initial data is collected, written up and reviewed line by line; categories or labels are generated, and a list of them grows; the labels are reviewed and typically a more abstract category is attributed to several incidents or observations. (Huberman, 1994).

This process, **exemplified** in Table 7, led me to define the research areas previously mentioned: teachers' identity, conceptions of professionalism and working conditions; headteachers' roles and responsibilities; parental and community participation in schools; patterns of interaction between the central administration and the schools.

Table 7 - The process of analysis
(Example)

Area of analysis (example)	Categories (summary)	Codes (examples)
Teachers' Identity, conceptions of professionalism and working Conditions	- Professional identity	- Vocation; child-centredess; global development; autonomy constraint, personal fulfilment; sense of duty; salary and status; basic skills
	- Organisational identity	- School culture, school projects, students' background, school and community facilities etc.
	- Professional Relations	- Norms, segmentation, cooperation, new professionalism, school hierarchies
	- Institutional Participation	- Teacher autonomy, group activities (types, attitudes, frequency); power relations; micropolitical activity ...
	- Human relations	- Proximity/avoidance - Teacher talk (main issues) - Groups - Relations outside school

In this phase, the Nud'ist programme became an extremely useful tool. It enabled me to make decisions in respect of the creation and recreation of codes and categories without excessive constraints on timings or procedure.

In spite of the fact that this process was largely inductive, the "comparative " goals of my study led me to pay attention, especially in the definition of the categories and research areas, to the political and academic debates that the new models of SBM have generated in recent decades (see Chapter 1). Theory was also important in the discussion of the main research findings. I should say, therefore, that most of the categories established and issues raised in this research emerged from the interplay between the stages of field work, the "reflexivity" arising from it and the literature review developed along the way (see Parts II and III; see also Table 6).

The writing process was crucial in all the stages of the research: compiling filed notes and memos, coding and categorising, focusing the study, dealing with personal and research dilemmas with the help of my field "diary", drawing up reports, drafting chapters. In fact, in qualitative studies "analysis is not the last phase of the research: it is concurrent with data collection or cyclic" (Ely *et al*, 1997, p165). As a consequence, "living by words" is a fundamental part of the (qualitative) research process (Ely *et al*, 1997). The product of this process is, I hope, "a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the images of the research, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, pp2-3)

The Research Process: validity and limitations

The difficulties I experienced, particularly at the outset of the field work and the data analysis, are a clear illustration of one of the limitations of this research: the ones that stemmed from my own inexperience in research of this kind. Furthermore, being an individual research project, other variables will inevitably have affected the outcome (my age, sex, profession, personality, social status).

The workings of politics in Portugal, which forced me into a redefinition of the sample as well as uncertainty as to the advance of the reform process, brought to the research an element of tension that I had not anticipated. I not only had to partially redefine the study, but also to increase considerably the amount of fieldwork (by including three new schools to ensure "representativeness" in the second phase of the research).

This period of redefinition was in fact the hardest part of the whole process (June 1999 to January 2000). Although it was a gruelling experience, it at least helped me to acquire a more flexible attitude to the process, something which had been missing in my previous research experience. And this outlook is fundamental in qualitative approaches, given that they imply "flexibility in dealing with theoretical and substantive issues" (Burgess, 1997, p157).

The triangulation process

If flexibility is the "duty" of the field researcher, it should not be construed as the opposite of meticulousness; indeed, it often constitutes a prerequisite of same. In addition, the validity of a qualitative study should be measured by other means, and not by scrupulous adherence to a predefined research plan. The presence of multiple research strategies constitutes an important requisite in this respect, since "a hypothesis should stand up to confrontation with a series of complementary methods that allow it to be tested" (Webb *et al*, 1966, quoted in Burgess, 1997, p158).

In the current research, four main forms of triangulation were used (see Denzin, 1979, 1994). In the first place, "theoretical triangulation" was present in the attention paid to the various theoretical perspectives regarding the issue of SBM (see Chapter 1). Secondly, "spatial triangulation" which led me to conduct a "collective case study" based on schools with different sociological and organisational characteristics. Third, "methodological triangulation" simultaneously embraced "intra-method"[13] and "inter-method" triangulation. In this latter respect, emphasis should be given to the parts played both by the ethnographic interviews and by participant observation. Mention should also be made of the complementary role played by documentary analysis (projects, plans, minutes, school regulations) and the comparison with surveys recently conducted and which touched on the issues under analysis (Borges *et al*, 1998; Barroso, 2001; see Chapters 4 & 5)[14].

Finally, the great candour displayed by the overwhelming majority of the actors involved allowed for triangulation of the levels of analysis (individual, group, interaction between groups and collective).

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[13] The length of the project made it possible to interview teachers twice, in the majority of the schools included in the study.

[14] In the first part of the study a comparison was made between data obtained and those of a survey conducted by the Lisbon Municipality (who kindly granted me access to their findings for use in the current research (see Chapter 4). In the second phase, although there was no longer this possibility, I paid special attention to the results.

All these various aspects combined to underpin my confidence in the research. However, I cannot but stress the endless hours I spent, over almost four years, "watching, asking or examining" (Wolcott, 1992); that is, attempting to gain a "holistic" (systemic), encompassing, integrated overview of the context under study: "its logic, its arrangements, its implicit and explicit rules" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p6). Indeed, it is precisely this intense and prolonged contact with a "field" or life situation that is a distinctive feature of studies of an interpretative matrix:

> [As an ethnographer I am anxious to learn] to be an "astronaut of slowness", living at a different pace and placing emphasis on the social grace, the time and the rhythms that modulate the dance of life (Vasconcelos, 2002, pp54-55).

Study Sample

As explained previously, this study involved the participation of six schools, the main features of which I shall now describe (see table 7 and 8). The data presented refers, in the case of all the schools, to the first year of the research (1998).

Table 8 - Description of the Sample (First phase)

School Population	Main School	Park School	Avenue School
Nº of students	386	270	48
Social Background	Upper Middle class	Heterogeneous (129 underpriviliged)	Underpriviliged
Catchment Area	Homogeneous (school neighbourhood)	Heterogeneous (school neighbourhood and peripheral districts)	Homogeneous (school neighbourhood)
Location of the school	Limit of the city (area of recent development)	Limit of the city (traditional neighbourhood)	Centre of the city (historic neighbourhood)

Inset 1 - MAIN SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - With over 350 pupils and 20 teachers, this school qualifies for inclusion in the largest group in the Lisbon area[15]. It is located in a sociologically homogeneous, young neighbourhood which is predominantly middle and upper class (around 60% of the population are holders of degrees). There is only a small number of disadvantaged pupils (7%) as a result of the *daytime* presence in the district of service-industry workers (home help and other unqualified workers).

Stability of management and teaching staff - The group currently running the school has been directly or indirectly involved in its management since the early nineties. Moreover Rita, first as director and then as president of the executive board, has been the head of the school for six years. In contrast with the stability of management, the school has experienced considerable mobility among the teachers as a result of the growth of the school, the retirement of some senior teachers and family conflicts.

History of the school - The school has a good reputation both in the district and in the educational community, and has operated for many years as a venue for teacher probation and research for various training colleges (universities and polytechnics). Teachers and directors highlight the process of internal change that has taken place since the late eighties. This process is based on a new kind of leadership, the development of project work in the school and an increasing partnership with the families (mainly through the parents' association).

Support services and extra-curricular activities - The school has a canteen and an LTA programme offering a wide variety of extra-curricular activities (English, swimming, dance, I.T., judo, etc). These are paid for and contracted out by the parents.

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[15] where approximately one-third of primary schools have more than 15 teachers

Inset 2 - PARK SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - With around 270 pupils and a dozen teachers, Park School is considered a medium-size school for the greater Lisbon area. Located in a middle class area, Park School is nevertheless a socially heterogeneous school. In fact, its population comprises a mix of children with family links to the neighbourhood (many of their grandparents number among members of an elderly local population) and some disadvantaged pupils. These latter come from run-down parts of the district and its immediate environs (the school is close to one of the main access roads into Lisbon). The existence of various well-known private schools in the area also means that Park School is less sought-after by the more privileged classes.

History of the school - Park School, in contrast with other schools in this study, was relatively unaffected by the neo-managerial directives that began to emerge in Portugal in the late eighties. Its low profile during the change process would seem to be due to three main factors: a stable teaching staff, relatively advanced in years; an absence of non-teaching directors, and little influence exerted by the families. The school is rarely approached by teacher training colleges, but is of some interest to companies (due to its size and middle class component).

Stability of management and teaching staff - The school is predominantly staffed by senior and associate teachers who have been there for many years. The director was new to the post but had acted for years as deputy director. He was one of the group of senior teachers in the school.

Support services and extra-curricular activities - The school had an LTA programme run by the local community centre, which "supervised the children" but organized no cultural or sporting activities. There had been attempts to set up a lunch service and a more educationally focused LTA, but these attempts had met with little success.

Inset 3 - AVENUE SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - At Avenue School, there were two teachers in charge of about 50 pupils. Located in the historic centre of

the city, it caters to a highly disadvantaged population from a neighbouring district. In spite of the fact that around 95% are classified as deprived, poverty is not the only problem with which pupils have to contend. They live in a highly stigmatised area in which activities associated with the so-called "underground economy" are openly practised: prostitution, the presence of illegal immigrants, drugs.

Stability of management and teaching staff - Two teachers have been working in the school for a number of years, one of whom acts as director.

Schools included in the second phase of the study.

Table 9 - Study Sample (Second Phase)

School Population	Main School	Pessoa School	Gama School	Magalhães School
N° of students	386	397	356	48
Social Background	Upper Middle class	Middle/upper Middle	Lower classes	Mixed
Catchment Area	school neighbourhood	One-third from the outside	school neighbourhood	school neighbourhood
Location of the school	Limit of the city (area of recent development)	Central	Central	Limit of the city

Inset 4 - MAIN SCHOOL (see inset 1)

Inset 5 - PESSOA SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - Pessoa School has many features in common with Main School (size, socio-economic level of the population, history, school departments). However, it is located in a district

with a much older population which, unlike that of Main School, is therefore in decline. This decline has nonetheless been gradual, because the school is in demand from certain sectors of the middle class who, though themselves living in less wealthy areas, desire a school with a certain *cachet* for their children.

Stability of management and teaching staff - The school's negative growth means that it has not been particularly affected by the issue of professional mobility. However it has, in recent years, had problems with its management. The departure of a former director who had run the school for many years left a problem of succession that is still to be resolved. Demographic regression, together with management problems, has helped to tarnish the public image of the school.

History of the school - Throughout the eighties, Park School was considered to be one of the finest state schools in the city of Lisbon, as well as one of the most innovative, with its extra-curricular activities and logistic support structures (mainly under the aegis of the parents' association).

Inset 6 – GAMA SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - Located in the same district as Park School and of a similar size (over 350 pupils), Gama School caters, however, to a very different school population. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils from ethnic minorities, especially Indian, are strongly represented in this school. The existence of various shanty-towns nearby - in the process of being demolished towards the end of the research - accounts for this atypical phenomenon in one of the city's wealthier suburbs.

Stability of management and teaching staff -The school had the same director for more than a decade (she retired unexpectedly at the end of the research, for the reasons described in Chapter 5), and had a fairly stable teaching staff during the same period. As some of these teachers gradually retired, a small group of young teachers joined the school, many of them just out of training college.

School history and services - During the nineties, the school was the centre for various projects focusing on multicultural education and links between school

and community. It thus acquired a certain prominence, if only within the scientific community. Although this was later lost, the school retained some of its special features (LTA run by the school, I.T. classes and the occasional English course). In the last national evaluation to be conducted on the school, it came out extremely well; the middle classes in the area turn almost exclusively to Gama School.

Inset 7- MAGALHÃES SCHOOL

Size and sociological characteristics of the school - At Magalhães School, there were four teachers in charge of about 48 pupils (including the special needs teacher). Located out of the centre of the city, Magalhães School caters to a highly disadvantaged population (around 40% classified as deprived). Pupils from several ethnic minorities, near fifteen, were represented in this school. The school lived a process of desperate need for survival (small size, strong presence of ethnic minorities)

Support services and extra-curricular activities - The school had an LTA programme run by the local community centre, which "supervised the children" but organized few cultural or sporting activities. There had been attempts to set up a lunch service but with limited success (contracting out of highly expensive services)

Stability of management and teaching staff - Two teachers have been working in the school for a number of years, one of whom acts as director.

PART II

THE "DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT" OF PORTUGUESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

CHAPTER THREE
PATTERNS OF COLLEGIALITY IN PORTUGUESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Central to this chapter will be the analysis of the patterns of "collegiality", predominant in Portuguese education at the time of the formal sanctioning of school autonomy (1998). The chapter consists of four sections. In the first section I shall analyse certain questions relating to the contemporary debate on the issue of "collegiality". I shall then proceed to an analysis of aspects relevant to an understanding of relations between colleagues in Portuguese primary schools: teachers' professional and organisational identity (section 2); professional relations between colleagues (section 3); patterns of institutional participation (section 4) and human relations between colleagues (section 5).

The analysis of peer interaction in Portuguese primary schools will be carried out in accordance with a very broad definition of collegiality: 'forms of social and professional interaction established between people who share the same activity in a particular place of work'. This methodological option does not derive exclusively from the conflict surrounding the area under analysis. It stems largely from the paucity of ethnographic studies concerning Portuguese primary schools. The limited nature of the research into primary teaching in Portugal renders inadvisable the premature closure of the field of analysis which would inevitably result from the *a priori* adoption of any one model of organisational analysis (rational, cultural, political, systemic).

It should be remembered that this phase of the research, and this part of the dissertation, correspond to the end of the *democratic management of schools* (1998). This was a complex period, conspicuous both for the secular traditions of Portuguese state education (centralization) and for the emergence, with the 1986 educational reform, of concepts and practices closer to neo-managerialist and neo-liberal concepts. This dynamic of continuity and change heralds the end of the school as *"local service of the State"* in Portugal and paves the way for the more substantial changes in school organisation (to be analysed in Part III of

the dissertation). The process of change is, in fact, visible in each of the phases under consideration, although these in themselves constitute important landmarks in the evolution of Portuguese school administration.

Patterns of Collegiality

Contemporary educational literature gives pride of place to the term 'collegiality', due to the great potential which it is seen to represent: a key factor in the personal and professional development of the teachers (Schon, 1983), a distinctive feature of efficient schools (Mortimore *et al*, 1989), a strategy for school improvement (Harris *et al*, 1997), a symbol of the new post-Fordist organisations ("flatter" structures"), a facilitator of innovation and processes of change (Fullan, 1999). The need to justify politically the adoption of school-centred management models has likewise contributed to virtually unlimited expectations being invested in peer relations:

> The expectation that any interaction that breaks the isolation of teachers will contribute in some fashion to the knowledge, skill, judgement, or commitment that individuals bring to their work, and will enhance the collective capacity of groups and institutions (Little, 1990, p219).

In spite of the political and educational importance it assumed in the eighties and nineties, as a consequence of generalised policies of 'devolution', the term 'collegiality' has to a great extent remained 'conceptually amorphous and ideologically sanguine' (op cit, p229). The exponential growth-rate of literature on the subject of SMB has failed to establish a precise description of the set of structures, aspirations and practices which go to make up the term 'collegiality' (Hargreaves, 1998). The most popular image of collegiate relations continues to be that of "a group of teachers working together in a cohesive school culture" (Timberley & Robinson, 1998, p608). The term 'collegiality' has thus remained essentially inseparable from an image of consensus, of a shared culture. In other words it has remained closely bound up with the functionalist and structural

functionalist tradition that predominated for decades in cultural and organisational studies.

This perspective on collegiality has been strongly criticised. Opposition involves, in the first place, the prescriptive nature of the collegial models: "those who advocate collegiality do so on the basis of prescription rather than description" (Campbell and Southworth, 1993, p112). Indeed support of the new professionalism often resembles a statement of faith. Reiteration of the principles is a substitute for analysis of the difficulties and contradictions inherent in the process.

> At its core, the new professionalism involves a movement away from the teacher's professional authority and autonomy towards *new forms of relationships with colleagues,* with students and with parents. These relationships are becoming *closer* as well as more *intensive* and *collaborative,* involving more explicit negotiation of roles and responsibilities. The conventional classroom focus *of teachers' work is now set within a framework of whole -school policies, and the planning and implementation of agreed priorities* (Hargreaves, D. 1994, p427, my emphasis).

However, empirical research has also shown that the pattern of relationships between colleagues is extremely complex and involves the co-existence of elements conducive to both professional isolation and team spirit:

> the cellular form of school organisation, and the attendant time and space ecology, puts interactions between the teachers at the margin of their daily work. Individualism characterises their socialisation; teachers do not share a powerful technical culture. The major psychic rewards of teachers are earned in isolation from peers, and they can hamper one another by intruding on class boundaries (...) But other observations should alert us against a too casual view of the significance of peer relationships. (...) We found earlier that teachers see each other as the primary source of useful ideas; we also noted that some elementary teachers assess their progress by comparing it with that of other teachers (...) One might expect some tension, therefore, between the impulse toward distance and the need for proximity, between the wish for boundness and the search for assistance (Lortie, 1975, pp192-193).

The apparent contradiction between a quest for both proximity and distance was also stressed by Little (1990)[2] and by the authors that consider the teaching profession to be at the same time a highly autonomous and a highly cooperative profession (Easton, 1994; Woods *et al*, 1997).

It could be argued that the "persistence of privacy" among teachers is solely a reflection of the bureau-Fordist matrix that has governed their work. Meanwhile, some authors have contended that the difficulties surrounding the implementation of collegiate models in schools are rooted in deeper issues concerning the nature of the teaching profession and the structure of the school institution itself. In fact, the teacher's work has been compared to that of an artisan, requiring great skills in managing group dynamics and in improvising in an ever-changing scenario (Lieberman, 1988; Huberman, 1993)[3]. In this respect it seems ill-suited to the complex systems of planning, implementing and assessment which are set out as a paradigm of collegiality in the specialist literature [4].

Besides this, organisational perspectives based on collegiate models omit the fact that these are "loose-coupled organisations" (Weick, 1976) imbued with a wide variety of aims that are not infrequently contradictory. "The structure of the schools allows for and reproduces dissensus and goal diversity" (Ball, 1987, p11). In this respect, despite being the target of markedly normative discourses, educational institutions are in reality great hives of micro-political activity (Hoyle, 1988; Blase, 1991; Gonzalez, 1998, 2002). Even apparently consensual situations, as pointed out by Thuler in his descriptions of the "great family", may obfuscate serious conflicts. "There are things that people prefer to keep to themselves, rather than speak out" (Thuler, 1994, p31).

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[2] when she drew a distinction between forms of sharing which allow teachers to maintain a considerable degree of autonomy and privacy (story-telling, sharing of ideas, aid and assistance) and those which imply interdependence and anticipate real forms of collective action ("joint work").

[3] Cooperation among teachers has also been described as voluntary, spontaneous and unpredictable (Hargreaves, 1998).

[4] See Chapter One

A second line of criticism involves the lack of historical and political foundations for collegiate models, including their claim for universal application and effectiveness. In fact, studies in the field of comparative education reveal that conceptions about teacher professionalism are influenced by the cultural, political and administrative traditions of the respective countries (Broadfoot *et al*, 1993; Novoa, 1998). In more centralized countries, for example, patterns of restricted professionalism would appear to be more common (Bardisa, 1995; Sharp, 1997; Planel, 1997). These results show that professional practices are, at least to some extent, tied to the social contexts in which they operate.

In these circumstances, I cannot but emphasise the contradiction that exists between the arguments put forward to justify the need for collegiate models and the virtues attributed to them:

> [Teacher collaboration], an educational concept that has been around for a long time is enjoying its new-found popularity precisely at a time of massive international reform and restructuring of schools aimed at ensuring that schools more efficiently and effectively satisfy national economic priorities (Smyth, 1991, p324).

In times of "aggressive" globalisation and strong international competition, it would seem futile to wait for the internal workings of organisations to be ruled by values and practices radically at odds with societal orientations. Moreover, social and political issues are generally regarded by the new managerial perspectives to be essentially technical problems

> It is ironic that, at a time when social disadvantage appears to be increasing in Britain, school effectiveness theory places less emphasis on poverty, deprivation and social exclusion, and more emphasis on organisational factors (Morley & Rassol, 1999, p6; see also Chapter 1).

Some authors even stress other difficulties inherent in the dominant concepts of collegiality:

- the difficulty in maintaining, either theoretically or politically, that any kind of society or organisation can (or should) be governed exclusively by universally approved norms;
- the ambiguity which surrounds the concept of collegiality and which makes it include virtually everything, from informal chats between teachers to whole school planning and action research (Hargreaves, 1991);
- the existence of types of collegiality which may favour the exercise of organisational power by managers and administrators (Corbett, 1991; Ball, 1994).

The importance given to organisational factors is another feature of neo-managerial concepts that has been widely criticized (Clark & Newman, 1997). Indeed, early studies concerning teacher cultures concentrated on the need for a *technical* culture shared amongst teachers (Lortie, 1975) or, more recently, on the advantages to be derived from the development of a community of 'reflective practices' (Stenhouse, 1979; Schon, 1983; Nias *et al*, 1989). Pedagogy was at the centre of these visions of collegiality.

Nowadays, there is a marked tendency to identify collegiate practices with the organisational dimensions of the school and with the development of whole-school policies which find their expression in documents and platforms for local action and evaluation (school projects, regulations).

This change of references should not be underestimated. Sergiovanni (1997), for example, by making the distinction between organisation and community, clearly illustrates the power of metaphor and the risks involved in over-emphasising the organisational dimension:

> Life in organisations and life in communities are different in both quality and kind. In communities, we create our social lives with others who have intentions similar to ours. In organisations, relationships are constructed for us by others and become codified into a system of hierarchies, roles and role expectations. Communities too are confronted with issues of control. But instead of relying on external control, communities rely more on norms, purposes, values, professional socialization, collegiality and natural interdependence. (...) The

> ties of community also redefine how certain ideas are to be understood (...) Collegiality in organizations results from organisational arrangements (variations of team teaching, for example) that force people to work together and form the team building skills of principals. In communities, collegiality comes from within. Community members are connected to each other because of felt interdependencies, mutual obligations, and other emotional and normative ties (Sergiovanni, 1997, 233).

It therefore comes as no surprise that whole-school policies are seen by many teachers as a process of contrived collegiality (Hargreaves, 1998).

The new models of collegiality would seem, therefore, to have the perverse effect of repudiating the traditional teacher practices of "authentic collaboration":

> This planned, deliberative, mastery-oriented learning milieu would appear to be hostile to the growth of the spontaneous, development-oriented and unpredictable relationships that Nias *et al* (1989) and Hargreaves (1990) assert are at the heart of authentic teacher collaboration. More fundamentally, the relationships described by Nias and Hargreaves may have become anachronistic, even "unprofessional" in a post -Fordist workplace (Smyth *et al*, 2000, p85).

The potential for genuine collaboration and professional autonomy becomes caught in the web of dependences produced by the new management models: central evaluation, choice, parent participation, "transformational" leadership (see Chapter 1). This is why many authors suggest that public discourse on collegiality and partnership serves basically to obfuscate a process of profound change in patterns of social regulation and to facilitate the penetration of the morally and politically "neutral" ideology of management (Smyth at al, 2000; see also Chapter 1).

The emphasis on organisational identity and autonomy, central features of the new collegiate models, may also be seen to constitute a significant part of the hidden curriculum of marketized relations. Indeed, the primacy of the organisation implies "a move away from a publicly provided system of state schooling towards individual schools competing in the market place" (Whitty, 2002, p87). In addition, the importance attached to the organisational dimension

will reduce the possibility of collective struggles (Whitty, 1996, 2002) and pave the way for adaptation to the new enterprise cultures (Kenway, 1993; Smyth, 1999).

It would be impossible to take up all of the issues identified above in this Chapter, but I will address some of the main theoretical issues underlying the problems of collegiality and SBM, focusing in particular on:

- the professional and organisational values prevailing in Portuguese primary schools (market, public service ethic, community participation);
- the stance taken by Portuguese primary teachers with regard to the ideas of new professionalism, corporate culture and 'new managerialism';
- the nature of professional and social relationship predominating in primary schools.

Professional and Organisational Identity

The traditional identity of teachers, in particular primary teachers, has been associated with an interwoven set of values: holism, vocationalism, child-centredness, humanism [5] (Nias *et al*, 1989; Woods *et al*, 1997). However, contemporary educational policies would seem to be heading for a powerful reconstruction of primary teachers' identities (Menter *et al*, 1997; Woods *et al*, 1997). It is therefore important to gauge the impact produced on Portuguese primary schools by the dissemination, from the mid-eighties on, of attenuated forms of neo-managerialism:

- were the new managerial perspectives, however embryonic, seen as a challenge to the identity of Portuguese primary teachers?
- in what areas of the teachers' identity matrix did the new neo-managerialist concepts gain the strongest foothold?

These are the issues that form the basis of the present section, and which guide a considerable part of the reflection undertaken in subsequent sections.

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[5] full and harmonious development of the child; teaching as a vocation, a deeply felt "mission"; caring" ethos

Professional Identity

Prominent features in the professional identity of Portuguese primary teachers were the omnipresence of the *children,* the *social relevance* of the teacher role and the *basic skills* that the pupils are expected to develop at this level of learning (mainly reading and writing). "Colleagues" were conspicuously absent from a discourse that stressed professional fulfilment as a result of a multifaceted and lasting relationship with the children.

> When I was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always said 'teacher'. Because I like teaching, I like being with children, I enjoy watching the way they develop under our guidance (...) The primary teacher is with the children day in day out for a whole year. The teacher becomes a mother and father to them. Sometimes we spend longer with them than their own parents. They tell us about their problems and we try to help them to solve them. It is very different from, for instance, the 2nd Cycle, where the children have seven or eight teachers and 50-minute classes. Everything seems much more planned and limited there (Ana Maria, contract teacher, Main School).

This bond with the children is so strong that it remained the matrix of professional identity, even after years of involvement in other professional spheres. For instance, Rita, who has been the head teacher of Main School for the past ten years, whenever asked about her job, mentions almost exclusively the personal satisfaction derived from a profession which contributes to the learning and welfare of children.

The importance attached to personal satisfaction also helped primary teachers, especially the older ones, to find compensations for the difficulties they encountered at the professional level: "It is a very demanding job, but also a very satisfying one. We see the children around us making progress, and this is its own reward. The salary is not the only issue. It's a way of life." (Teresa, senior teacher, Park School)

Among younger teachers, the secondary importance attached to salary and status was less in evidence. Young teachers claimed that they loved their job; but their professional identity was markedly characterised by their place in the social hierarchy. They said things like: "I have always applied for a higher level of teaching, but haven't managed to get a place", (Susana, Main School) or "I couldn't get a full-time job in the second cycle." (Sonia, Park School).

Thus, they had become primary teachers but were acutely aware of their inferior social status in certain contexts.

> In villages the teacher is still regarded as an important person, someone who is both teaching and educating the children. Here in the city, teachers are very cut off: the teacher is there to teach and nothing else (Ana Maria, contract teacher, Main School).

In upper-middle class communities the status problems were even more acute:

> There are parents who treat us as their servants. A few days ago a mother told me not to set her daughter homework except on Tuesdays and Thursdays, because she had too many other things to do. Another one asked me if I had a degree. For them a primary teacher is nothing but a second class teacher (Helena, Main School).

It therefore comes as no surprise that embarking on a teaching career can, particularly among the middle and upper classes, lead to a bitter disillusionment. Indeed, the increasingly protracted degree courses to which the younger teachers were subjected (after 1986) did not necessarily guarantee a passport to the essential ingredients of middle-class status traditionally associated with the profession: respectability and security. Job security did not exist for contract teachers; respectability was challenged at every turn. And the emblematic image of the profession, the public service ethic which was a feature of bureau-professionalism was losing credibility in a universe in which citizens were increasingly giving way to consumers (Whitty, 1996; Gewirtz, 2002). In this climate young graduates increasingly ask themselves:

> But what kind of career is this, where you don't feel competent at anything? Where a parent can come and say,' Don't set my son homework because it leaves him no time to play'. Or another comes and complains, 'You've been doing the same

> thing for almost a week, and John hasn't brought any work home. You've got to push them more'. What profession, what career is this? (Helena, contract teacher, Main School).
>
> There are people who left school at 15 earning as much or more than me. Do you think the children don't know this? How can they take school seriously, how can they respect their teachers? (Claudia, contract teacher, Main School).

However, even among young teachers, who have been trained to teach at different levels, the quality of the relationship with the children was still presented as a competitive advantage of primary education: "Children are more affectionate, more attached to us. It is a very close relationship, much more gratifying than in the second cycle" (Dulce, contract teacher, Park School).

The difference between new teachers coming into the system and those who already have years of experience seemed, therefore, to lie more in the degree than the nature of job satisfaction. New teachers continued, in spite of feeling insecure in their own identity in a universe that no longer appreciates the "missionary spirit" (Maria Teresa, Avenue School), to consider the relationship with the children as the most important and most gratifying feature of their work. Colleagues were on a secondary plane: "At the end of the day, our job is our classroom" (Helena, contract teacher, Main School).

The data collected suggests that the identity matrix of Portuguese primary teachers has been little affected by the managerial concepts preeminent in recent decades. Only on the "vocational" front, and among younger teachers, does there seem to be a greater sensitivity to the new "market rules" and "economic imperatives".

The indifference of most teachers with regard to the new legislative directives (new professionalism, school culture, entrepreneurialism) is confirmed by the reasons they give for choosing the school where they work.

Organisational Identity

Proximity to home, the quality of infra-structures in the area and the social background of the pupils (Main School) were the main reasons given by

teachers for their annual application to particular schools. Despite the variety of reasons put forward, there is an interesting common denominator: the total absence of references to the dynamics of the institutions they were applying to (projects, leadership styles, working relationships, socialising with colleagues). The lack of interest in the organisational characteristics of the schools was so marked that the majority of those interviewed said that they actually had no previous information about the school, besides its location.

The interviews at Main School, one of the best-known schools in Lisbon, clearly revealed that this lack of information could not be attributed wholly to the bureaucratic idiosyncrasies of the official applications machine:

> The school is in the area I live in, but I didn't know hardly anything about it. The only information I got, before I started working here, was the day I received my contract. *One of my* colleagues, I can't remember who, the moment she realised I had been assigned to this school said: "Oh dear, poor thing, you're going to have to work hard." *And another commented* that the parents were really difficult (Adriana, associate teacher, Main School, author's emphasis).

This extract shows how easy it would have been to get information about this school, if the candidate had only taken the trouble to do so. However, teachers seemed to care little about the organisational identities of the schools .The only aspects of organisational identity spontaneously mentioned were those relating to the characteristics of the school population: the social background of the pupils and the expectations of students' academic performance:

> I was aware that the school was located in L and as L has a different social background, that also influenced me (Sílvia, Main school).

> I chose this school because it is near my home and the children are good pupils. It's different (...) I was in another school where the children were good pupils too, but they couldn't do better due to the people they mixed with and even the food. That bothers me, because I like teaching, I even like telling pupils about other subjects that are not on the syllabus. Well, it's satisfying to work with these kind of children (Adriana, associate teacher, Main school).

Some teachers also expressed their preference for working in a state school:

> In a private school the work is much more controlled. It is much more supervised. In a state school there is more freedom, you are free to do whatever you like, the classroom is yours, it's your own territory (...) The boss is invisible: it's the State. People don't want close supervision. If they work for the State, it's to get certain 'perks' (Filipa, associate teacher, Main school).

> In a private school you are worried because the parents are paying and you have to do what they want you to. Over here, it's more relaxed (Teresa M., associate teacher, Park school).

This connection between State schools and having a free hand confirms the findings of other studies, which show that there is no clear-cut opposition between educational centralization and teachers' professional autonomy (Broadfoot *et al*, 1988, Grace, 1995, Lauder, 1999). Neither is indifference towards new organisational directives peculiar to Portugal:

> In most European countries, the fact of belonging to a given school organisation did not play, until recently, a significant role in teacher identity. Recruited and placed at the whim of administrative decisions, teachers saw no need to form a lasting attachment to the school (Novoa, 1998, p183).

It therefore comes as no surprise that the new organisational obligations should be felt to be a burden (see Chapter 6):

> Nowadays we are called upon to do so many different things. We have in-service training and the schools are usually involved in more than one project. Besides the school project, there are other projects. All this is very demanding on teachers. Apart from this, parents today are very intolerant, and this is not always right. In fact it's the main problem (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

Professional Relations between Colleagues

The Sacred Rules: Privacy and Inviolability of the Classroom

The limits of freedom granted to teachers by Portuguese State schools centre around the classroom (Afonso, 1999). The teachers interviewed were well aware

of their autonomy in this domain: "In his classroom the teacher is king of the castle" (Fátima, senior teacher, Main School).

Moreover, they expressed the desire to protect their classrooms from intrusion of any kind:

> It is also important that this school has *independent rooms, isolated rooms,* because last year I worked in an open-plan school, which is very confusing. It's disturbing for both pupils and teacher (Francisca, associate teacher, Main School, my emphasis).

> Teachers in the other cycles give one class in one place, another in another. With us it's different. We always work in the same place. We establish a special relationship with *our classroom* and, when we're placed in the same school again, try our best to stay in it. It ends up being a little bit like *home* (Constança, senior teacher, Park School).

It was therefore not surprising perhaps that the use of public areas - gymnasium, library - and the sharing of classrooms for Leisure Time Activities (LTA) were resorted to with a certain reluctance or when utterly unavoidable:

> It's impossible to give a PE lesson. Impossible. Firstly , because there are always people going past, and then because there is always somebody checking up. The children are not relaxed and neither are we (Adriana, associate teacher, Main School).

> Everyone avoids rooms where there are LTA, because they are dirty and untidy. Teachers arrive to find the rooms in disarray, with things all over the place. But that's not the only reason people avoid LTA. The truth is that no one likes to share their rooms (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

At Park School, similar problems were encountered when parents tried to set up a "Play" project. The teachers only agreed to this taking place in the "dirty areas", i.e. the area outside classrooms in open-plan *schools,* generally used for painting and handicrafts. And even so, the implementation of this project raised objections because it interfered with the concentration of the (few) teachers who remained in school after classes (field notes, school board meeting, Oct. '99).

It would obviously be naïve to attribute this jealous guarding of the classroom merely to factors of a pedagogic or sentimental nature (identification with the work-space, desire to safeguard pupils' concentration). Indeed, the "reserve of intimacy" maintained by the majority of teachers goes beyond the *physical* boundaries of the classroom:

> In the teachers' room people chat about this and that - the weather, the traffic, T.V. programmes - everything but what they *should* be talking about: the problems we face every day with the children and their families. Perhaps because I had almost always worked on my own, when I came to this school and saw seventeen teachers, I thought there would be some team spirit, with teachers discussing things and trying to solve problems together. But now I've been here for three years and can see it isn't true (Simone, associate teacher, Main school).

Indeed, prevailing cultural codes limit mutual support between colleagues. Both 'supply' of and 'demand' for support were avoided, even when teachers were at the beginning of their career:

> Last year I was given the first year. I panicked. How am I going to teach these children to read? Because it's difficult and I didn't know how. I listened to my colleagues talking, and didn't know what to do (Ana Maria, novice teacher, Main school).

> New teachers seem so lost when they arrive at school that sometimes I even go up to them *to see if I can summon up a bit of advice* (Fátima, senior teacher, Main School, my emphasis).

The difficulties surrounding cooperation between teachers seemed to be bound up with the bureaucratic and Fordist rules prevailing in the Portuguese work context. This paradigmatic orientation was reinforced by a certain built-in concept of professional competence, which hampered cooperation. This concept emphasised the criteria of independence and self-sufficiency in the definition of the "good teacher", to the detriment of wider perspectives on professional development. The norms of equality of status prevailing in Portuguese primary schools, insofar as they did not affect the privileges of older teachers (see institutional participation), also served to transform offers or acceptance of "help" into a sign of professional inferiority or superiority:

> The other day I asked for *help* from a colleague who is familiar with the 28-word method. I needed this method to work with one of my pupils. She gave me some material and now I hope she'll show me how to use it. But there is very little exchange of this kind. People are afraid of saying they don't know, or can't do something. They are afraid of being labelled unprofessional (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

> We are all teachers, here, all colleagues. No one is superior to anyone else. If I opened my mouth to criticise a colleague, she would immediately retort: and who do you think you are? (Fernanda, senior teacher, Park School).

That was why the admission of problems to colleagues who were closest personally and professionally had to be approached with circumspection:

> I chat a lot to my colleague Adriana because she had the Hugo problem. We talk a lot about it, but *she has never asked me for help. We are friends, but the conversation is always kept on a superficial level.* I have never been asked for *help* with school problems (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

Fear of breaking the rules, and thereby publicly exposing professional difficulties, is by no means unfounded. This particular aspect of the problem was readily apparent in the only episode I witnessed, during the whole of the investigation, in which one of the teachers decided to bring up the difficulties she was having at a teachers' meeting. Although she was an extremely committed teacher, and responsible for a very difficult class - six girls and seventeen boys and one of the most glaring examples of selective class composition at Main School - no one admitted to experiencing similar difficulties. The teacher's public avowal of her problem thus turned into a painful personal exposure:

> I was quite shocked that after working at the school for so many years, after going to the teachers' meeting and speaking so openly, nobody should say a word. I felt completely left out. Am I the only one to feel this? Am I the only one with problems? (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

In reality, Simone's openness had led to some unflattering professional interpretations:

> Only a few days ago in a teachers' meeting I was very upset because a colleague with tears in her eyes – *and it was the first time I had been in a situation like that in 20 years of service* - revealed quite clearly that she was *in despair.* You could see she wanted to leave, to run away, *because she was incapable of controlling her class.* I don't know the class, or what kind of pupils she has. But I was shocked to see the point she had reached (Clemente, senior teacher, Main School).

Given the risk of this type of interpretation when the privacy taboo is broken, it is not surprising that many of the teachers prefer to be loyal to the principle which Liebarman called "be private, be practical" (1993).

Working with colleagues: Profane norms

Throughout the twentieth century Portuguese primary education was subjected to a succession of divergent ideologies (see Chapter 1). This situation created a climate particularly favourable to the development of a heterogeneous school structure, which brought together extremely diverse forms of action and refletion on action (Santos, 1990, Sarmento, 1998). And since they outlived each political cycle, the various mandates granted to education tended to overlap and, in a sense, "impregnate" subsequent processes. To illustrate this phenomenon, I may draw on the metaphor of the 'school palimpsest' (Sarmento, 1998):

> Palimpsest is, literally, the medieval codex on which the copyists inscribed their mark with a stiletto, salvaging for the purpose sheets of parchment which had already been written on. The sheets were scraped, without completely obliterating the previous text, which, with the passing of time, would reappear (op. cit., p.35).

The concepts and practices of Portuguese primary teachers often seemed, therefore, to derive from completely contrasting sources, which was precisely the situation identified in the realm of collegiality. The various signs of segmentation, referred to throughout this chapter, contrasted with a marked acceptance of the principles of teamwork. In fact, virtually all the teachers

interviewed expressed agreement with the principles of teamwork.[6] The arguments put forward were a combination of personal, social and professional factors:

> I like to exchange ideas with colleagues, to feel the support of other people; otherwise I end up feeling extremely isolated. Apart from that, everything is easier when you work as a team. You get better results and the atmosphere is much more pleasant (Iva, associate teacher, Park School).

> The school is a single entity. It should organise parties as a single entity. Some people are good at music. Others have talents for the visual arts. These qualities should be recognized and complement each other. We can all learn from each other. I am sure that if the school worked like this, we would all feel much better (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

Agreement with the principles of teamwork and, in particular, the constant need to justify the fact that it does not exist, show a certain penetration of the new managerial concepts at this level of education. The "profane" nature of the new professional guidelines[7] was, however, patent in the ease with which the absence of such practices was legitimised in social terms:

> teachers are always moving from one school to another . It is hard to form teams in this situation (Iva, associate teacher, Park School).

> It's not that people don't want to work with their colleagues. It's just that life in the big cities is very complicated. It's hard to get people to stay on after 3.30 (Clemente, Main school).

> A lot of people here have young children. It's difficult to find a time to work together (Maria João, contract teacher, Main school).

It should also be mentioned that the apparent ideological consensus as to the advantages of teamwork concealed important differences when it came to:

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[6] The concept of teamwork is that of Muchielli (1988), who brings together interpersonal and professional aspects

[7] with regard to the "golden rule" of non-interference described above

- the areas suitable for teamwork and the forms it should take;
- the priority given to teamwork when pitted against all the demands, both personal and professional, with which teachers were confronted.

The very concept of teamwork prevalent among the teachers had, as we shall now see, very little to do with the new neo-managerial concepts.

Working with Colleagues: dominant patterns

The term collegiality has been used in educational literature to describe widely differentiated types of interaction (see Little, 1991; Hargreaves, 1998). In order to avoid the misapprehensions commonly surrounding this issue, I shall begin by clarifying the concepts I shall be using in this sub-section:

Segmentation - non-existence or little relevance, in terms of content and frequency, of forms of professional interaction between teachers.

Collaboration (consensus)- this designation will be used to refer to teamwork carried out against a background of widely shared values (Timberley & Robinson, 1998).

Cooperation (or coordination) - This term will refer to forms of voluntary cooperation among teachers within a framework of values and orientations that may be partially or radically divergent. In these circumstances, agreements are circumscribed by particular objects and norms, which may play a central part in the cohesion of the group, or of the school (Derouet & Dutercerq, 1992).

New professionalism - This term will refer to forms of voluntary and compulsory cooperation among teachers, within a framework of neo-managerial values and orientations (e.g. "whole school planning; "school project ", marketing of schools, "contrived collegiality").

Table 10 summarises the main professional patterns identified in the schools under analysis. It should be mentioned that:

- segmentation was the dominant pattern identified in the study (more than half of the references);
- forms of cooperation were mentioned by roughly one -third of the teachers;

- new professionalism had few but important advocates;
- references to "collaboration" were rare and occurred mainly with reference to the revolutionary period.

Each of the contemporary patterns will now be described and analysed, in some detail.

Table 10 - Patterns of Collegiality

Patterns	Forms	Focus
Segmentation	Consolidated	Classroom
	Naturalistic	and
		Core curriculum
Cooperation	Mutual support	Personal and professional support
	Exchange	Pedagogic
	Joint action	Pedagogic
New Professionalism	Teacher-parent centred	Administrative, social, peripheral
	Teacher centred	curriculum

Segmentation

The interviews conducted confirmed the still largely "solitary" nature of the teaching profession in Portugal: "the predominant attitude is still one of 'my children, my classroom" (Sara, Main school).

> Here teachers lead cloistered lives. They do their own thing (Iva, associate teacher, Park school).

> They all do things their own way. One thinks the syllabus for the second year is too sparse, so she starts on the syllabus for the third. Another thinks directive teaching gets the best results, so she does it that way. Others think that parents have the highest authority, so they do what pleases them (Maria, associate teacher, Main school).

In spite of constituting the dominant patterns of collegiality in primary schools, educational segmentation was still far from constituting a homogeneous category in respect of the motivations in which it was rooted. Indeed, the research made it possible to identify two main forms: "consolidated", and "naturalistic".

The *"consolidated"* type brought together a restricted group of teachers whose isolation was voluntary and based on strong convictions about the advantages of concentrating attention on the classroom and the pupils. "There just isn't time for everything" and "when we try to do everything, our main work suffers" were some of the expressions heard most frequently when these teachers were asked to give their opinion about their obligations outside the classroom (work with colleagues, meetings, extra-curricular activities, projects). The psycho-social factors commonly used to justify teacher "resistance" - anxiety, insecurity, corporatism - would seem to be somewhat unconvincing explanations of the observed behaviour. Indeed, among the most isolated teachers, few had had any difficulty making their mark professionally: most enjoyed a good, in some cases excellent, pedagogic reputation, both within the school and in the community. Despite, in most cases, coming up to the age of retirement, they were still committed to their work. Their isolation was not the result of unwillingness, but of a profound conviction of the 'ethic of care' which holds the children as the central points of reference. It was this ethic which prompted them to concentrate all their time and available resources directly on work with the children.

This voluntary self-isolation on the part of certain Portuguese primary teachers confirmed, at least in part, Flinders's contention that "isolation is a convenient strategy in that it safeguards the time and energy necessary to meet the demands of teaching" (Flinders, 1988). We should not forget, however, that we are dealing with teachers who had completed their professional training and socialization at a time when group work and organisational collaboration were educationally unheard of and politically untenable. There may be other

strategies for adaptation, including teamwork itself, more in line with the experience of teachers who completed their training in different conditions.

"The *naturalist*" category includes a broad band of teachers who, while receptive in principle to the notion of teamwork, claimed that personal considerations (young children, involvement in training), contextual conditions (size of school, urban school) or professional aspects (multiple demands, clash of interests, school dynamics) made it difficult to put into practice.

> There isn't much teamwork. There should be, but there isn't. Everyone works on their own, in their classroom. Maybe it's because the school is very big, and it's difficult to get together (Diana, associate teacher, Main school).

> A contract teacher is never in one school for long. In a big school, with a large teaching staff, we're completely lost because we're only there for a short time. In these circumstances it's very difficult to be accepted and to work as a team (Lurdes, contract teacher, Park School).

The way most of the comments were phrased suggested a wide acceptance of the "status quo" in this field. This element seems to confirm the superficial assimilation of the new organisational and professional concepts referred to in the previous point (*profane norms*).

Finally, it should be stressed that none of the forms of segmentation under analysis implied a total absence of relations between colleagues. Discussing 'cases' and 'where we are on the syllabus' were practices common to almost all the teachers interviewed. These patterns of communication were in fact very similar to those identified in other countries: the custom of 'labelling' pupils according to their social or ethnic origin (Rist, 1971); the habit of measuring personal progress by comparison with colleagues (Lortie, 1975) and of organising professional activity in terms of coverage or non-coverage of school subjects (Huberman, 1993).

However, these forms of interaction are not typical of "collaboration cultures" (Nias *et al*, 1989; Hargreaves, 1998). Storytelling for instance, the most typical

form of professional interaction in Portuguese schools, is a feature of contexts in which collaboration is absent:

> Under conditions of nearly complete independence, teachers satisfy the demands of daily classroom life by occasional forays in search of specific ideas, solutions or reassurances (...) Contacts among teachers are opportunistic. (...) Teachers use stories to gain information indirectly when they are confronted with powerful occupational norms that suppress more instrumental forms of help-seeking (Little, 1990, p515).

Coordination

The defence of privacy and independence in their daily work did not mean that primary teachers failed, throughout the process of democratic management of schools, to develop meaningful forms of interaction with colleagues. The end of the self-management experiment did not, of course, mean the suppression of all voluntary forms of cooperation between teachers. The scope of this cooperation seems, however, to have become more restricted, with professional relations more dependent on personal preferences:

> People lived a period of great openness, great interest [during the revolution]. There were many projects and people were strongly committed to progress. Lectures were organised; writers were invited to schools. There was an exchange of information and of teaching materials. If a colleague attended a course, he was ready to pass on what he had learned to the others. It was a stimulating time. (...)
> Now all this has gone. You work with a colleague you get along reasonably well with, and that's it (Sofia, senior teacher, Main School).

Nevertheless, like the "revolutionary experiment" that persists in the testimonies of many of the older teachers, the memory of certain experiences of peer collaboration may remain alive for many years to come:

> I spent three years in a school in the Padre Cruz district (a difficult area). I managed to stay so long because I loved it. I had a colleague I worked really well with, and we did everything together: we prepared classes, organised visits and

> trips, exchanged lesson-plans (Fatima, senior teacher, Main school).
>
> When I was in Ameixoeira, I always worked with the same colleague. We got on really well. If I was having problems making a worksheet, she would do it, and vice-versa. We exchanged everything. In the final year she was doing a training course at João de Deus and didn't have much time. So she used all my material. I would go into her classroom and give her all I had (Hermínia, senior teacher, Park school).

The post-revolutionary forms of cooperation generally involved *only* two teachers (pair-work) and may imply different degrees of interdependence: mutual support, "exchange" and joint action.

Mutual support

A substantial proportion of the teachers interviewed (approximately one-third) referred to a special preference for one particular colleague: frequent socialising during the morning break, lunches together, brief professional discussions, occasional outings.

The struggle against the feeling of isolation at work and personal empathy constituted the principal 'raison d'être' of this kind of interaction:

> I often meet with my colleague Sonia, to have lunch or discuss anything that's bothering us. It's good to do this because we don't feel so isolated. Perhaps the fact that we came to the school at the same time brought us together (Claudia, contract teacher, Main school).
>
> Last year I was placed in a school where I ended up very isolated. It was for that reason I didn't want to stay there. So I came back here, where I have colleagues I can talk to if I've got problems (Joana, associate teacher, Main School).

Despite being the most basic form of cooperation identified, this kind of relationship played an important role in the daily life of certain teachers. In some cases, it became a major factor in the way teachers shaped their careers (moving together through the school system, joint participation in certain

courses and training sessions). Besides this, it sometimes represented a first step towards deeper forms of cooperation.

Sharing of information and products ("exchange")

At an intermediate level of cooperation professional interchanges between colleagues became more systematic. These forms of cooperation came under the heading of "exchange" and essentially involved aspects of work such as conversations between teachers, exchange of worksheets and lesson-plans, recounting experiences, joint preparation of peripheral curricular activities like music, P.E. or games.

> Last year I was lucky and found a colleague I got on really well with. We talked about the students, discussed the most difficult cases and exchanged worksheets and lesson-plans. Sometimes we prepared a different kind of class together, a game or something like that (Silvana, Park School).

> I often get together with my colleague Victoria who has the same year as me. We exchange ideas, look at each other's lesson-plans and try to complement each other (Joana, Main school).

This type of interaction seemed to help, above all, to diversify educational resources without significantly affecting individual teachers' *modus operandi.* Suggestions made by colleagues were incorporated into each individual teacher's pedagogy and, on occasions, considerably modified prior to being put into practice. They largely corresponded to the practices of "scanning" and "sharing" described by Little (1990). They were ways of enriching tasks rather than of transforming professional patterns ("habitus").

"Joint action"

At a deeper level, "exchange" took on the proportions of "joint action". Indeed, in spite of the prevailing patterns of segmentation, some teachers managed to establish long lasting forms of cooperation, which embraced the main aspects of professional activity: lesson planning, implementation, and assessment.

> My colleague Simone and I, for example, establish aims together, compare test results and try to relay more or less the same message to different groups of parents. We work together, but not always using the same methods, because we don't have to be the same. This pair-work makes us feel more secure (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

These forms of collaboration were, however, very rare, appearing to require stronger personal and professional affinities than those which characterized other types of cooperation:

> I came here this year and there were colleagues in the third year, Sara and Simone, who were already here and worked together a lot. At the beginning of the year we all tried to meet and work together. We tried to discuss everything, from study visits to planning. We tried at the beginning, as I said, but it just didn't work. (...) It didn't work because they were used to working together and I wasn't. But it wasn't only that. We didn't see eye to eye or have the same priorities. So I ended up working more with Ana. We don't plan together because our classes are very different, but we discuss things a lot. And sometimes we come up with more ideas than the three of us did before (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

> When I was at Oliveira School I was lucky in having a colleague that really understood me. We worked so well that she even took the words out of my mouth: I love it when that happens (Fátima, senior teacher, Park School).

In this sense "joint action" came close to the process I described as "collaboration". The depth of the relationship did not, however, preclude a certain diversity of values, interests and skills:

> Sara is very good at mathematics, and helps me a lot with that (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

> We decide the activities together, but we don't always do things the same way (Sara, Main School).

Although the focus and the level of the interaction varied, the three forms of cooperation - support, exchange, joint action - shared some essential features. First, they were all the result of *personal and professional affinities* between teachers, which were generated quite spontaneously, although based on certain

common "prerequisites" such as age, levels taught, years of service in the school. Despite the strong interpersonal dimension, which was a feature of these relationships, they should not be confused with simple friendship. They were all forms of cooperation that brought together, each in their own particular way, the teacher's personal and task orientations (Mucchielli, 1982). Secondly, none of these different forms of interaction implied a fully shared set of values and interests. Various teachers considered a certain degree of diversity, particularly in the area of skills and interests, positive. However, the basis for cooperation was considerably restricted when there was serious discord over major aspects of a teacher's work (teaching models, for instance):

> Last year I worked with a colleague who belonged to the Modern School Movement. I never interfered in her work or she in mine. We communicated what we had to communicate, and that was fine; but coordinating her actual work with mine was a different matter. She used to say, *'Evaluation sheets, fine', but when it came to classroom management it was completely different (...)*. For me the Modern School Movement has a lot to be said in its favour but generally speaking, it doesn't suit me. I just can't have the pupils moving around and making so much noise while they work. It's hard enough as it is to keep order in such big classes, so this way for me is unthinkable (Cesária, contract teacher, Main School, my emphasis).

Finally, the types of cooperation identified had developed against a background of strong sense of respect for peer autonomy. They seemed, consequently, to be based upon "norms which stress[ed] sharing and equality and foster mutual communication without requiring conformity" (Lortie, 1975, p112).

In fact, in these forms of cooperation almost anything went: adapting and "mixing" ideas, altering materials, delaying putting things into practice, abandoning strategies found not to work with a particular group:

> Sometimes we think, maybe if I do it more my colleague's way or partly my way and partly hers, it'll work better. So we try it and see if it works. It depends on the class (Cristina, associate teacher, Main school).

> However well you work together, you can't do everything the same way. There are things that work very well with one class but not with another. There are things that work well on a

> Tuesday but not on a Friday. You can't force it (Claudia, contract teacher, Main school).

This flexibility was not just a smokescreen to protect the teachers' autonomy. Reports collected showed that certain activities had been tried without success and subsequently abandoned or modified. Other testimonies revealed failure on the part of the teacher when trying out strategies, tried and tested in the past, on a new group of children. The current research thus indicates that at least part of the problem may lie in the difficulties inherent in a process of cooperation developed against the background of a constant "dialogue with the situation" arising from the specific nature, interactivity and unpredictability of each class (Lieberman, 1988; Huberman, 1993):

> [the teacher] adapts on the spot the instructional materials bought, given or scavenged, as a function of the time of day, the degree of pupil attentiveness, the peculiar skill deficiency emerging in the course of activity(..) In doing so, the teacher begins improvising with a series of ad hoc responses to the new situation (Huberman, 1993, p15).

The complexity of these obstacles, played down in the prescriptive models, help to give collegiality the air of an artificial process when instituted administratively (Hargreaves, 1998).

New Professionalism

The forms of professional interaction described above were based on informal, fragmented, contingent, coercion-free cooperation. There are, however, those social actors who try to turn the school into a cultural unit based on common and fully-shared values. This attitude was particularly prevalent among teachers with management or "special needs" roles.

> People don't regard the school as a space common to everyone. What I mean is that three or four people arrange to work together because they work well together, but they don't know what's going on in other years. The spirit of the school is not like that (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

> Partnership cannot be based on friendship, but on school grade levels, needs of the school, needs of the pupils, good manners, the example we have to set to others, particularly the children (Fátima, special needs teacher, Main School).

This critical attitude, while socially limited, gained strength during the course of the observation. In fact, at the beginning of this research, it was practically impossible, with the exception of the limited group of teachers who fell into the "consolidated segmentation" category, to find voices raised against any kind of cooperation between teachers. They were all signs of "modernity" and "good practice": "ah yes, we already have colleagues who work together. Not everyone is dyed-in-the-wool." (Armanda, deputy teacher). However, in the course of the period of observation, certain forms of cooperation began to be progressively ignored or even regarded as politically incorrect: "Here teachers work with people they like, not those they *should* work with." (Fátima, special needs teacher, Main School).

Besides this, there was a decline in the prestige attached to work carried out in the classroom. Initially, management was seen to indulge teachers who failed to participate in school activities but who showed great pedagogic ability and dedication to the pupils. This tolerance gradually began to diminish, and teachers' pedagogic excellence was no longer highlighted when associated with institutional practices considered outmoded and inappropriate.

Although some of these changes reflected genuine difficulties in involving certain teachers in non-teaching tasks, they also illustrated the emergence, at the educational level under analysis, of new organisational concepts and new norms for teacher professionalism. This change was in fact explicit in some of the interviews:

> What is missing is *that old story of a new school culture*, which some have taken on board and others not. *For some people, professionalism is still bound up with the idea of getting pupils through at the end of the year.* So work done inside the classroom is what is important, and there is the idea that if everyone works like that, the school is a good school. *There are others with*

> *a different conception, who realize that things aren't as simple as that* (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

These changes helped to produce a significant increase in the number of "group" activities in which the teachers were called upon to join. The new criteria for individual and organisational performance also became a new source of tension among some teachers.

Patterns of Institutional Participation

Teachers' Meetings and Social Events

The emphasis laid by primary teachers on their work with the children did not mean that they could avoid social and professional relations with their peers. Indeed, even the most ardent apologists of professional autonomy could not get out of certain types of cooperation imposed by social norms and legislation. There were two main types of involuntary cooperation identified in the course of the current research: attendance of *teachers' meetings* and participation in *social events* organised by the school (parties, exhibitions, school magazine). It is the role of these kinds of interaction in the school dynamic that constitutes the next objective of the analysis.

Meetings

Primary teaching was the only educational sub-system whose management model retained plenary teachers' meetings as the formal organ of school management. It was also the one in which the process of legal and administrative dependence took on more significant configurations. This produced a marked contradiction between the 'vacuum' of authority (content) and the 'self-managing' way in which it was exercised. It is therefore of interest to inquire into how Portuguese teachers handled this contradiction and, in

particular, how they used the narrow margin of autonomy granted them by the system ,notably in the pedagogic field.

Systematic observation of teachers' meetings, over the period of approximately twelve months showed that the formal institutionalisation of collegiality in Portugal had not contributed to the development of patterns of 'extended professionalism' among the teachers. Plenary teachers' meetings were not seen as an opportunity to create a common culture among teachers - technical or organisational - produced by the convergence of objectives, concepts, languages and pedagogic processes (see also Chapter 4). There was neither collegiate pressure designed to achieve congruence between the learning/teaching models used in the various schools, nor practices of reflection or scrutiny on the pedagogic work carried out by individual teachers. Professional evaluation itself took on a 'virtual' character whereby it could actually be processed before the report was even submitted (Park school), or without the envelope containing it ever being opened (Main school). School unity was merely formal and boiled down to an exercise in rhetoric solemnly laid down in a document - the school project - drawn up with the minimum of participation (see Chapter 3). Discussion of technical and pedagogic issues also played an extremely minor role in teachers' meetings. Indeed, as will be seen from the detailed analysis conducted in the next Chapter, the part played by this organ was essentially:

- informative, for the relaying of administrative directives and the dissemination of cultural, pedagogic and social programmes;
- social, for the organisation of school events (e.g. Christmas party) .

Teachers' meetings were therefore in no way generative of any significant collaboration or pedagogic reflection on the part of teachers.

Team ventures: parties, exhibitions, school magazines

Paradoxically, the few team events organised in schools constituted, of all the collective practices observed, the ones most likely to illustrate the segmentation of educational practice noted in Portuguese primary schools:

- *exhibitions of pupils' work,* classroom centred, with no clear relationship between the exhibits (thematic, graphic or any other unity). Thus in one exhibition, for example, posters of Marilyn Monroe came after drawings illustrating the seasons of the year and before the description of a visit to the zoo and a graphic representation of the respiratory system (Main school, July 1999).
- *the organisation of parties* was very sketchy and concerned mainly with avoiding discipline problems ("enter stage right, exit stage left"; "sit in rows at the side of your teacher") and with ensuring that the programme had a certain variety ("there should be a song, a dance and some acting"). There was no previous defining of objectives or of the message it was intended to convey.

The 'collective' thus in no way evoked any semblance of cohesion, or give-and-take on the part of individuals. The 'school organisation' could be summed up, in its concrete form, as a 'loosely coupled' collection of options, visions and individual ventures. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that at the Christmas party put on at Park school (1999) no eyebrows were raised at the inclusion of a dance typical of the 'Popular Saints' (celebrated in Portugal in June), a choreography of dance music ('Macarena') and a cowboy song with costumes and references to 'Made in USA'.

This notion of the collective seemed to be largely unconscious, which does not mean, of course, that it was any the less powerful. When the independence of the individual teacher was questioned, even from the 'noblest' of motives, the result was invariably a conflict, which was settled by the restoring of the 'natural order' of non-interference. This was the case, for example, with the relaunching of the school magazine at Main school. Two teachers volunteered to do the *montage* and, in order to give the magazine some technical and visual cohesion, offered to adapt any texts given them by colleagues (using specific software). Their colleagues not only refused this 'help' but also approved the proposal that each class should have its own page and that the theme, content and graphics would be entirely independent of other classes' contributions. One

group of teachers even contended enthusiastically that the magazine needed no cohesion, even in minor, formal respects (print-type and size).

The supporters of cohesion in the magazine, clearly in a minority, restricted their comments to formal and graphic considerations, never even touching on the 'content' and 'pedagogic processes' that would be reflected on every page. The editorial line and educational philosophy to be conveyed by the magazine were likewise left out of the discussion.

It can therefore be concluded that the teamwork practices identified in Portuguese schools during the final phase of democratic school management - teachers' meetings and social events - were in no way a barrier to the autonomy of each individual teacher. 'Collective' discussions and ventures actually did more to legitimise than to limit the diversity of practices in Portuguese primary schools.

Micropolitical Activity and School Hierarchies

The degree of freedom granted to teachers by this special "collective" vision of the school was, however, not unqualified. Besides formal constraints (legislation and other forms of regulation), there were also social practices that strongly determined the participation and working conditions of many teachers. In fact, the social structure of Portuguese primary schools was, during the period under analysis, strongly characterized by socio-professional cleavages of a bureaucratic nature: between senior, associate and contract teachers (see Table 11).

Table 11 - Professional Categories

Professional categories	Nature of contract
Contract teachers	Short-term (from a week to a year)
Associate teachers	Long-term
	Regional, not school link
Senior teachers	Permanent tenure in a school

The influence of senior teachers manifested itself in an uneven distribution of certain resources and equipment. Micro-political activity was identified essentially in the following areas: *class composition, choice of classroom, timetable preferences for the use of school equipment, guarantee of substitution in the case of absence.* It was invariably the senior teachers who came off best in these conflicts:

> As contract teachers they ignore us. What I feel, and what many teachers feel, is that contract teachers are the skivvies. They get the worst classes, the worst problems. We get the dregs that nobody else wants. It's not very nice to say this, but it's true (Ana, contract teacher, Main School).

> When it's time to choose timetables for the library and the gym, the list goes round to everyone [pause] *but it goes round the senior teachers first* [stress] (Celeste, contract teacher, Main School).

> There's always a fight about who's going to share their classes with LTA and English, because nobody wants them. Last year we decided to draw lots. It fell to a teacher who was about to retire, and she was really annoyed. She does nothing but grumble. *That's why there's talk of abandoning the lottery idea next year. Those classes will simply go to new teachers!* (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

There were, however, issues so crucial to the interests of the groups that they found their way into public debate. Class composition always caused the most intense micropolitical activity, sometimes giving rise to heated discussion at teachers' meetings. At Park School, such discussions managed to dominate four teachers' meetings, following the "accidental" allocation of a class with seventeen deprived pupils to a senior teacher (field notes, July-September 1999). At Main School proceedings were, in general, conducted more discreetly, although not all the senior teachers were equally subtle when it came to expressing their preferences:

> The older teachers live here and know the pupils, their brothers, sisters and cousins. They even know their surnames. So they say, 'I want this pupil. This pupil's mine'. And they even go as far as to say, 'Oh, this one's Guinean. He's no good.

> You can have him.' It's appalling, what goes on. And the classes are totally unbalanced (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

An analysis of the process of class composition over two consecutive years led to the identification and ranking of the types of pupil most frequently rejected:

1) Pupils with special needs;
2) Pupils from ethnic minorities, especially if they did not speak Portuguese;
3) Pupils classified as deprived or difficult;
4) Male pupils (a feature mainly observed in Main school, where some classes had a boy/girl ratio of 1: 4).

It should, however, be mentioned that when the pupils were placed in their original classes, the attitude of rejection was considerably modified. Although the teachers did not believe in the academic potential of these pupils, they were concerned with their emotional welfare and that they should be fully integrated in the class and the school. They were sympathetic towards their problems, raised funds for study trips, devised 'scholarships' for English classes and LTA, and did their best to make them feel at ease in potentially embarrassing social situations (by asking for materials, masks and costumes for shows, clothes for parties, etc).

Contract teachers rarely spoke out about the selective nature of pupil distribution among the classes:

> The contract teacher is afraid because she is aware that she is not linked to the State. Because she is scared, she doesn't express her opinions. Contract teachers hold their peace when they should actually speak out (Sonia, contract teacher, Main school).

Their silence, however, was not motivated by fear alone:

> I sometimes think that if I am contracted, if I am only at this particular school for a few months, why should I declare war on the teachers? Even if they backed down, which they wouldn't, where would it have got me? The following year I'd have to start all over again at another school (Silvana, contract teacher, Main School).

Indeed, forced to "exit" annually, the younger teachers in the schools under analysis rarely played a part in the pedagogic and institutional renovation referred to in other studies (Ball, 1987). Rather they withdrew into their own group, as suggested by school boards (see Table 15, Chapter Four) and confirmed by the account of human relations in the school (see next section). Acceptance of the hierarchy was, anyway, an important part of teachers' 'hands-on' learning experience as they embarked on their career (see Lieberman *et al*, 1988). In their turn, the majority of senior teachers had no difficulty in finding justifications for the privileges they enjoyed at the end of their career:

> These young teachers are not aware of what we went through. They complain when they have a class of 25 or 26 pupils. I had up to double that, with four different levels" (Maria João, senior teacher, Main School).

> Nowadays they [young teachers] have 'perks' and find lots of problems already solved, on either a social or professional level, which we didn't in the past. You are aware of the teacher's status in the past, aren't you? We almost had no timetable. We used to get 40 pupils and we were expected to prepare them for the examination. Teacher evaluation was done on the basis of the results of those pupils. That was the criterion, a very stiff selection network. All we went through and fought for, they will never have to experience (...) People don't appreciate what it took to get things changed. For example, why do we make a small class when there are pupils with special needs in that group? Why is that? The Department of Education didn't do anything about it. It's because the teachers fought for and demanded it. There was an involvement, a concerted struggle to get what we demanded. And the reduction in class-size to 25 pupils? That was another difficult victory we really had to fight for (Sofia, senior teacher, Main School)[7].

Although undisputed by the younger teachers, the position of senior teachers was coming under threat from other directions. Indeed, as the research

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[7] According to this perspective, equality and hierarchy were not considered mutually exclusive. Equality among colleagues was the equality that came from the career cycle. This notion of

progressed, there was evidence (as already mentioned) of the emergence of a new foundation for the establishment of a teacher hierarchy: teachers' organisational "contribution". In point of fact, the directors of some schools had begun enthusiastically to espouse the new managerial orientations issued by the central administration: drafting of projects and socio-educational partnerships (see also Chapters 4 & 5). Thus was created the basis for a new and "meritocratic" hierarchy, based on participation in "special" projects and institutional investment.

> It's true that if a teacher prepares his pupils well, is punctual and conscientious, nobody can really touch him. But being a teacher today is far more than that. He has to join in other duties, participate in projects, devote more time to the school (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

Conflicts therefore began to arise, related to the high profile of certain teachers and certain projects. The 3L project, based at Main School, was particularly targeted. This was a joint project with the Lisbon Higher School of Education, the Department of Basic Education and some institutions abroad. It brought with it certain 'perks' for the only teacher involved: a computer in her classroom, a higher allowance for didactic material, foreign travel and receiving visitors, as well as a certain visibility in the pedagogic and administrative community. There was almost daily criticism backstage, culminating in various direct or indirect demands on the school management: removal of the computer to the library, limits on the expenses of the teacher to be paid out of the school budget, participation in the receiving of foreign guests and specialists from the central administration. The conflict dragged on bitterly for over a year.

The notoriety of this new kind of teacher, moulded in areas considered to be outside the classroom (everyone knew about serious "cases" in this teacher's class) was far from being institutionally pacific:

> There are teachers here who have a certain status because they're involved in high-profile projects or because they're somebody's little pet [i.e. management]. And then you discover that they're the ones with the biggest problems in the

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equality accepted, and in some ways presupposed, the hierarchy among individuals who were at different stages of their professional life

> classroom. They're supposed to be so brilliant . . . and then they can't even teach the pupils properly (Helena, associate teacher, Main School).

In spite of all this, the teacher in question managed to maintain her position throughout her whole time in the school, thus illustrating the importance of the new forms of professional and organisational investment. It was the formal recognition of an enterprising spirit very different from the one that had driven the democratic management of schools:

> [during the revolution] it was different: we didn't operate in career terms. We used to work together and share everything. Not any more. Now, if anything, people say: "I do this or that and don't tell anyone about it (Sofia, senior teacher, Main School).

Human Relations in the School

Educational literature suggests that teachers need a warm and positive environment to mitigate their sense of isolation and the tension produced by the ambiguity and unpredictability of their professional duties (Lortie, 1975; Esteve, 1992). The social interactions observed in the course of this study suggest that the high index of educational segmentation in certain schools may be an obstacle to the development of an overall relaxed atmosphere. In these circumstances cordial relations could only be found in the micro-practices of cooperation already described. Collective relations, on the other hand, were superficial and, on occasion, uncomfortable. The interactions established in the teachers' rooms were particularly telling in this respect. They reflect, to a great extent, as has been pointed out by various authors (Kainan, 1994), the organisational "ethos" of a particular teaching institution.

Contained "Balkanisation"

In Main School, the reduced dimensions of the teachers' room, together with its multi-purpose nature - telephone, fax - made it an uninviting place to linger. However, the problems were not only of a functional nature. Indeed, the school

was firmly divided into *cliques* composed according to the teachers' position in the career structure (contract, permanent). Relations between these groups, although there was no overt hostility, were difficult (see bureaucratic conflicts, in this Chapter). For this reason, attempts to improve the premises and to foster fraternization had proved to be fruitless:

> In this school all you hear is, 'She's already in such-and-such a place on the syllabus, and I'm only here'. This year I thought we could change that a bit. That's why I had that coffee machine installed over there, so that we could all chat over our coffee. I got the machine, but that's as far as it went. Maybe the problem is the differing interests, if you see what I mean. Because what happens is either that everyone stands around in a deathly silence or else there's such a hubbub that you can't hear yourself speak. And the usual topic of conversation, of course, is the weather. There's no real liaison; it just can't be achieved (Maria, associate teacher, Main School).

One of the obstacles to easy socialization was the fact that, due to the cramped conditions, it was not possible physically to separate the different groups in the school. This is why the atmosphere in the morning break, when everyone was present in the school, was felt to be uncomfortable and why it in turn produced a 'spontaneous' movement whereby the room came to be used by different groups at different times. Some teachers stopped going to the teachers' room on a regular basis. Depending on particular preferences, they either chose to remain in their classrooms, to visit colleagues or to go out 'illegally' to cafés or other places in the neighbourhood. At lunchtime the teachers' room was the 'province' of the younger teachers, who had lunch in the school, or a group of associate teachers who mixed with them more frequently. Since most of the permanent teachers lived locally and went home for lunch, it was easy for the younger teachers to get together.

In the afternoon after classes, the teachers' room was the venue of a different type of 'clientele'. It became the meeting point for a few teachers whose support for the headteacher was well known. These teachers had been in the school for several years and showed all the signs of a heavy professional investment. They would come and go freely between the director's office and the teachers' room.

Conversations with the headteacher were invariably brief: messages, requests for information, some clearing of the air, and light-hearted and relaxed exchanges of opinion. But they did help to maintain cordiality, the sharing of information and a good relationship between the Board and its closest supporters. Senior teachers also had ease of access to the director's office. However, they rarely went into the teachers' room, (with the exception of the deputy head and those teachers who, for health reasons, were involved in administrative tasks).

Traces of the Past (Park School)

At Park School, the teachers' room was above all a stop-off point. Teachers would go through, rarely stopping for long, at different 'phases' of the morning break. Most elected to go at the end of the break to interact (very) briefly with their peers. Others, including the headteacher herself, who also had contact hours, made rare appearances.

'Old stories' (Herminia, Park school) rather than lack of space, were responsible for the social aloofness apparent among teachers of this school. These 'stories' included suspicion with regard to management of the school's finances, pressure and reprisals against colleagues through requests to the Board for 'information', and the presentation of formal complaints. During the period of observation, these tensions were gradually being relaxed, following the departure from the school of some of its more aggressive members:

> Teachers are starting to appear more in the teachers' room (Paulo, head teacher).
>
> My colleagues all say that this year was absolute bliss (Catarina, contract teacher).

The teachers' room was thus being used more and more, but relaxation never came to be the norm.

A 'fifty-fifty' school: *condemned to getting on with each other*

The two teachers of Avenue school met every morning in a room adjoining the schoolyard, which also functioned as the director's office (at lunchtime and after school). Professional relations were pleasant, albeit limited to school and schoolwork. The teachers organised study trips together, and, even during the sojourn of a substitute teacher, were very much at ease with each other. These observations confirm the greater possibility of social integration which some of the teachers interviewed attributed to smaller schools. It may also help to explain the higher rates of participation recorded for these schools (Borges *et al*, 1998). Such forms of professional collaboration between teachers could not however, be generalized. Indeed, in smaller schools, especially those located in difficult areas, "teachers have no choice but to get on with each other" (Carlota, headteacher). Structural constraints led to mutual support, it is a "question of survival" (Julia, teacher).

Thus, the social relations identified in primary schools revealed, above all, a high degree of isomorphism towards the professional patterns dealt with throughout this chapter. They reproduced, rather than contradicted, bureau-Fordist matrix presiding over the organisation of the Portuguese educational system.

CONCLUSIONS

The patterns of collegiality identified in Portuguese primary schools, during the final phase of the *democratic management* of schools, are in sharp contrast to the "participatory explosion" that followed the implementation of democracy in Portugal (Stoer, 1986; Lima, 1992). The formal structure of the primary school management model, which preserved important symbols of the democratic transition, has not prevented significant changes from taking place on the level of participation and professional interaction between teachers. In the wake of a

period of "talk, talk, nothing but talk"[8] has come a time when there reigns, on occasions, a "deathly silence" (Maria, associate teacher, Main school). It is impossible to understand the marked discontinuities identified in the dynamics of Portuguese schools without reference to the social and political processes that have influenced the country during the past twenty-five years: democracy, revolution, normalisation, globalisation. This statement makes it possible to reiterate the reservation expressed at the beginning of this chapter with regard to those organizational concepts, which effectively advocate collegiality as if this were a management technology whose *modus operandi* was independent of its context. Indeed, the Portuguese experience in the realm of school administration shows that teachers are not, intrinsically, individualistic, collegiate or corporative. Depending on the particular context, any one of these characteristics may prevail. "Cultural identities are not rigid, let alone unchangeable" (Santos, 1994, p119). The current defence of collegiate models would thus seem to be based on a decontextualized, 'cartesian' concept of professional identities and organizational dynamics. The credibility of this concept has been systematically undermined in a wide range of historical, social and anthropological studies. The current research constitutes a further critical contribution.

The research also made it possible to identify continuities and discontinuities between the patterns of collegiality typifying Portuguese primary schools and the organizational and professional dynamics operating in other contexts.

I shall therefore begin by affirming that the professional concepts and patterns of collegiality that emerge from the present study are largely congruent with features of the bureaucratic and professional models described by several authors (Lortie, 1975; Lieberman *et al*, 1988; Gewirtz, 2002). Indeed, Portuguese primary teachers present a relatively rich and diversified professional matrix. This matrix emphasises, fundamentally, the importance of the relationship with the child, the global nature of educational relations, the social importance of the profession and the fundamental nature of learning at this level of education.

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[8] Pintassilgo, Português ex-primer Minister

This definition is interesting as much for what it includes, at its core, as for what it leaves out. Included are the pupils, the pedagogic work and the social role of the school. Excluded are the organizational aspects, 'extended' curricular management, personal and professional development of the teacher, scientific and academic knowledge, and relations with peers and with the community. Portuguese teachers thus fell, at the phase under analysis, into the paradigm of 'restricted professionalism' (Hoyle, 1974), which has been considered typical of teachers' professional culture (Little, 1990; Lieberman *et al*, 1988). The differences that may be highlighted, according to the present study, include, from the perspective of compared education, two main aspects.

In the first place, the almost universal nature of the reference to the children as a reason for entering the profession and as the main source of job satisfaction. The proportions assumed by this phenomenon in Portugal seem to transcend those apparent in other countries (Lortie, 1975). While not intending to establish causal relationships, which, by its qualitative nature would be beyond the scope of this study, we will simply mention *en passant* the extremely high percentage of women at this level of teaching (Araujo, 1992), the 'non-academic' image traditionally attributed to it (Monica, 1978), a narrower definition of primary education in Portugal (K stage 1 and 2) and the absence of a clear redefinition of the role of primary teaching in the wake of the 25th April (Sarmento, 1998).

The second difference noted during the present study concerns the way in which 'comprehensive values' (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995) were interpreted by Portuguese primary teachers. Indeed, the ethic of public service, which is a feature of bureau-professional regimes, generally implies a primacy of 'comprehensive' values over 'market values' (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Cribb, 1998). Although this primacy was clearly established as existing in the schools under analysis, "comprehensive values" seemed to include almost exclusively socio-emotional aspects. This interpretation of the comprehensive school, although referred to in the specialist literature as a feature of particular individuals or groups (Lortie, 1975; Gomes, 1992), is not usually seen as constituting a widely disseminated cultural pattern.

This study revealed, on the contrary, a *generalised* disbelief, on the part of Portuguese primary teachers, in the meritocratic function of the state school. The belief that, academically, "the school cannot compensate society" (Bernstein, 1982) has become clear on various occasions throughout this chapter: in the accounts of 'cases', in the micro-political activity designed to guarantee the pick of the best pupils, in the reasons put forward for choosing Main school (a upper and middle class school).

The present study further revealed a growing contradiction between the ethic of public service behind the choice of profession and the social importance attached to it. This situation, which is reflected in an increasing ambivalence towards the duties involved, is particularly evident among young teachers working in middle-to-upper class environments (Main school). Even so, it is possible to speak in general terms of the existence of a strong professional identity among primary teachers. Indeed, this identity is in striking contrast with their marked reluctance to participate in the organizational aspects of the schools in which they teach. A teacher's trajectory through the education system, for example, is determined by factors 'extrinsic' to the culture and dynamic of the school: proximity to home, sociological composition of the school population, services available in the area. It is interesting to note, moreover, that none of the issues central to the educational debate of recent decades - leadership, ethos, professional development, collegiality, projects - were presented as factors worth mentioning in this trajectory (see organisational identity). We can thus confirm the opinion of Rita (headteacher, Main school) when she asserted that "the spirit of the school isn't at large out there" and that she was "tired of being the lone standard-bearer" (for the school).

'Indifference' towards educational philosophies of an organizational matrix was not displayed solely on the discursive and ideological front. It was also evident in the shabbiness and 'symbolic nudity' of the communal areas in Portuguese schools: teachers' room, bar, gymnasiums, libraries, and corridors. These were merely 'passage-rooms' and presented no challenge whatsoever to the

traditional primacy of the classroom or to the segmentation of educational activity.

Indeed, practices of segmentation of educational activity - consolidated and constrained - made up the dominant patterns of interaction in the schools under analysis. Needless to say, this does not mean that practices of professional cooperation were absent in the same schools. It merely means that the *way* these professional interactions were conducted was very different from the *way* advocated in contemporary organizational literature. The 'vision' and the 'mission', which should be inherent in the functioning of collegiate structures (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, 1998) only "exist" in the documents required by law (area school project, school regulations).

The practices of cooperation actually identified were only marginally in line with formal collegiate structures. They were similar to the collaboration cultures described by Hargreaves (1998) in that they were spontaneous, voluntary and non-formalized. Irrespective of the level of cooperation achieved, the professional autonomy of each of the team members was clearly inviolate. Decisions taken were in no sense binding. What 'worked' or 'didn't work' in group/class terms was what determined, in the final analysis, decisions as to whether or not to implement 'agreements' reached within the peer-group. As a result of this 'dialogue with the situation' (Huberman, 1993), joint decisions could be freely modified, deferred or even reversed.

The spirit of freedom, which pervaded voluntary cooperation between teachers also, applied to other aspects of collegiality. There was even a great deal of licence with regard to the practices of educational segmentation, which many teachers continued to favour. The extent of professional interaction between colleagues was considered, except by the executive board and its staunch supporters, to be 'a matter of personal choice' (Lortie, 1975, p194).

The apparent fragility of these processes of voluntary cooperation between peers - the almost microscopic proportions of the group, the absence of formalization, the virtually unlimited freedom enjoyed by each member of the group - did not prevent these forms of interaction from lasting for years or from

having a considerable effect on patterns of teacher mobility (either by encouraging teachers to stay or to make concerted efforts to move on).

The organizational impact of these kinds of relationship was, however, minimal: firstly, because they focused on pedagogic rather than organizational issues; second, far from eroding the 'egg-crate' structure of the schools, they strategically modified it to mitigate its more adverse effects: personal, professional and organizational isolation.

The forms of cooperation identified in the present study have, in spite of everything, the advantage of demonstrating that teachers are not intrinsically individualistic. On the contrary, they are capable of establishing and carefully maintaining forms of collegiality 'geared to development' (Hargreaves, 1998).

The areas in which peer cooperation was found (the quest for personal and professional support, development of pedagogic support structures) and the attitudes underlying them (unconditional respect for others, for different practices and for the diversity of educational contexts) further serve to illustrate the enormous gulf which separates these practices from contemporary collegiate guidelines. The latter advocate, above all, organizational unity, acceptance of leadership, administrative rationalization and modernisation and development of evaluation procedures (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, 1998; OCDE, 1995). Teachers' cultural conceptions are so different that it becomes hard to accept the allegations of professional 'empowerment' that run through so much of the discourse on 'school autonomy'.

Finally, I should mention that the predominance of practices of segmentation and spontaneous cooperation in Portuguese primary schools did not mean that they had remained immune from the educational policies and public discourses that have increasingly supported new concepts of collegiate professionalism. The influence of these new organizational concepts makes itself felt mainly in two ways: in the cultural domain and in the relationships of power and prestige prevailing in Portuguese primary schools.

In the cultural domain, we can see an almost generalized assimilation of the concepts that advocate the 'imperatives' of teamwork. This assimilation,

however, was still extremely superficial and associated with an attitude of marked complacency towards the 'constraints' - personal, professional and systemic - which stood in the way of teamwork. Besides which, the desired type of cooperation was mainly concerned with pedagogic rather than administrative matters. The importance of the organization continued to be a concept foreign to the dominant professional culture in primary schools. There, however, groups in these same schools who showed that they had already taken on board important aspects of the new organizational perspectives. These groups were mainly drawn from two socio-professional categories:

- school directors, directly or indirectly professionalized (exemption from contact hours, elected for several mandates);
- special education teachers who, in conformity with current Portuguese legislation, played an essentially advisory role.

Nevertheless, in the phase under analysis, the bureaucratic hierarchies still made up the dominant nucleus in primary schools and their compartmentalised structure continued to be quite strong. Teachers argued in favour of teamwork, but their educational activity was still carried out on a largely segmented basis.

It may therefore be concluded that, in the final phase of democratic management, Portuguese primary teachers used the formal and informal structures of participation mainly to safeguard the plurality and independence of their professional practices. Resorting to various types of teamwork in some cases mitigated the personal, professional and institutional isolation that might be the result of such an orientation.

The bureaucratic and professional concepts, which dominated the profession, have begun, meanwhile, to give way to new professional and managerial ideas centred on endorsement of organizational unity, pedagogic and administrative modernisation and community participation. The argument for the new professionalism was put forward in 'gentle' language, appealing to the values of unity, community and participation. There was no doubt, nevertheless, that in the final phase of democratic management, there were signs in Portuguese state schools of the competition "between diverse conceptions of common good

[public interest, business logic, community logic] and more importantly the struggle between them for legitimacy" (Leliéver, 2000, p9)

This phenomenon of convergence with the processes of educational restructuring tried out in other countries exerted greater or lesser influence on the different schools. The extent of the transformation was, as we shall see in the next chapter, directly connected with the professionalization of the leadership and with the patterns of community involvement.

CHAPTER FOUR
LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL PARTICIPATION

This chapter aims to analyse the power relations and processes of participation that dominated the running of Portuguese primary schools during the final phase of the *democratic school management*. It is therefore an attempt to understand the plurality of interests at work in local educational contexts. Indeed, due to the diversity of local actors, the process of transfer of powers must inevitably be the object of political and sociological analysis. Different local actors might benefit from new autonomies opportunities for action. Afonso identifies three models of SBM, each one with a different focus of empowerment:

> The model that centres on the school manager, in which the powers devolved to the school tend to be concentrated on the managing structure; the model centred on the teachers, in which a major part of the decision-making power is invested in internal collegiate bodies overseen by the teachers; and the model centred on the community, in which community members - parents, guardians and representatives of local interests - have considerable "say" in the running of the school (Afonso, 1999, pp 60-61; see also Chapter 1).

In order to contextualize this analysis, reference will then be made to certain aspects of the intense debate which in recent decades has surrounded the issue of school leadership and the role of families in education (section 1). An attempt will therefore be made, in the first place, to identify and describe the model of local management prevailing in Portugal by the end of the democratic management of the schools (section 2). Particular emphasis will be given, in accordance with the goals of this study, to the role of school managers (section 3) and "customers" (section 4) in the running of primary schools.

The New Managerial Perspectives: the Centrality of Leaders and the Power of the "Customers".

New "Headship" : Transformational Leadership or Neo-Managerialism?

The dissemination of SBM models has produced enormous expectations in relation to the development and transformation of the role of school managers. Indeed, writers employing neo-liberal educational perspectives have argued, on the basis of "lessons" learned from successful international corporations, in favour of the need to distinguish between two areas of organisational intervention: "the first consists of assuming responsibilities, executing, accomplishing, directing; the second of guiding, exerting influence, focusing attention on the basic objectives and on global strategy, having vision" (Bárrios, 1999, p94). The first area of intervention has been associated with the traditional idea of the nature of management or leadership. The second implies a new kind of leadership which gives greater attention to ethical and cultural issues - meanings and values - and involves commitment to organisational development.

> Earlier views about the nature of leadership itself were rather constrained and superficial, tending to emphasize the exercise of formal authority in achieving the goals of the school (...) More recently, we have gained a deeper appreciation of leadership by examining the relationship between leaders and other members of staff, noting the importance of meanings which are derived from the leadership acts (...) It seems that emphasis should be given to transforming rather than transactional leadership, with the intent being to change attitudes and bring about "commitment" to "a better state", which is embodied in a vision of excellence for the school (Beare *et al*, 1997, p37).

The importance given to the vision of the leader constitutes a fundamental characteristic of neo-managerial literature (Crawford *et al*, 1997; Dunford *et al*, 2000) and also one which comes in for heavy criticism. Indeed, beneath an appearance of innovation and scientificity, the image that all too frequently

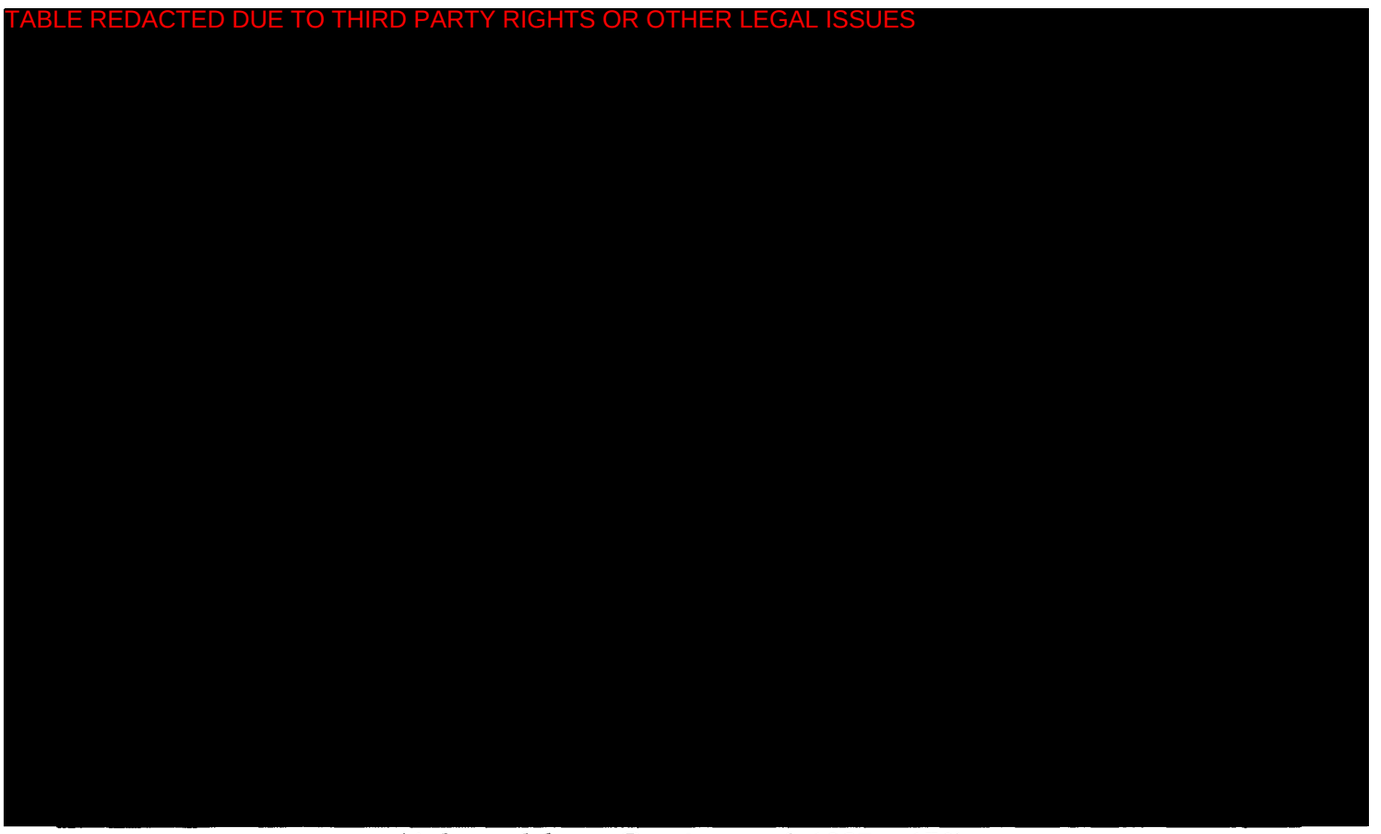
comes through in this literature is not so far removed from that of the "hero" who featured in the classical approaches to organisations (see trait approach, Jesuíno, 1987). Moreover, as was the case in these early studies, the relationships between the leader and the group are defined in markedly paternalistic terms. The "vision" not only emanates from the leader but should permeate all the organisational structures and processes, thus endowing "the ordinary with dramatic significance" (Beare *et al*, 1997, p34). This attitude to organisational dynamics suggests that power relations may be concealed beneath the more politically acceptable designation of leadership (Watkins, 1989). From a democratic point of view, it clearly makes little sense that the school leader should unilaterally define the basic values and the future of the organization. The role of the democratic leader will be closer, as pointed out by Barber (1984) to that of a "facilitator" committed to the development of processes of "critical participation" within organisations (Friedberg, 1988). With this in mind, the role of leader would not involve the definition and communication of organisational objectives, but support of the school community in the process of "creating and developing its own identity" (Watkins, 1989). The neo-liberal concepts of management in education, on the other hand, through advocating strong or "transformational" (Burns, 1978) leaderships, do no more than convey, to the majority of members of the organisation, an illusion of power and participation:

> In many ways the concept of leadership has been chewed up and swallowed down by the needs of modern managerial theory. The idea of leadership as a transforming practice, as an empowering of followers, and as a vehicle for social change has been taken, adapted and co-opted by managerial writers so that leadership appears as a way of improving organisations, not of transforming our world (...) The transformational leader is now a popular concept for organisations (Ticky and Devanna, 1986). But the concept has been denuded of its original power; transformational leaders are now those who can lead a company to greater profits, who can satisfy the material cravings of employees, who can achieve better performance through providing the illusion of power to subordinates (Foster, 1989, p45).

The role attributed to the leader is not, however, the only aspect of neo-liberal concepts to come in for criticism. Indeed, various authors have shown - historically, politically and sociologically - the reductionist nature of these concepts (Foster, 1989; Grace, 1995; Power *et al*, 1997; Gewirtz, 2002). These authors contend that what is needed are "studies of school leadership which are historically located and which are brought into a relationship with wider political, cultural, economic and ideological movements of society" (Grace, 1995, p5). Their contribution is apparent in a number of areas: distinction between the concepts of leadership and management to clarify the historically contingent nature of these concepts and the elitist nature of the new concepts of leadership, explicit in the assumption of the leader's superior vision and ethics. Besides this, they have drawn attention to the growing "subordination" of bureau-professional concepts to the market values produced by the educational commodification which accompanied the neo-liberal perspectives on education.

Certain of these authors have at the same time systematically documented the thoroughgoing process of restructuring the work of school managers and teachers which is taking place in contemporary societies (Power *et al*, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Woods *et al*, 1997; Menter *et al*, 1997; Arnott *et al*, 2000; Gewirtz, 2001; van Zanten, 2002; Whitty, 2002; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). Accordingly, they refer, in opposition to the abstract concepts of transformational leadership, to the emergence of a new concept, which they call "corporate managerialism" or "neo-managerialism". This new dialectic is based on a market "ethic" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Cribb, 1998; Gewirtz, 2002) which incorporates itself in a complex way with traditional professional values and which increasingly superimposes itself upon them (see Table 12).

Table 12 - Values drift



(Adapted from Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p150)

The change of paradigm brought about by this subordination, summarized in Table 12, is the source of innumerable transformations daily affecting school organisations. "Teachers, and in particular directors, are beginning to talk different languages: pedagogy, marketing, finance. They are becoming 'multilingual' and learning to 'talk management'" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p99). Moreover, the principles of participatory education are giving way to the pragmatism and imperatives of "speed of decision-making" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Moore, 2001; Gewirtz, 2002). At the same time there is an increasing importance attached to the school image and the creation of new semiologies of schooling (Ball, 2000).

This trend may have more or less profound effects on the organisational dynamics of schools, generating processes of either "reorientation" or "colonization", according to whether or not assimilation of the language and logic of the market implies major changes to the values, processes or activities of the organisation (McLaughlin, 1991; Gewirtz *et al*, 1995).

Apart from all this, management structures - directors and senior teachers - may respond in different ways to the "demands" of the market:

> One method involves a kind of role distancing, a degree of cynicism in "acting out " but not taking seriously a position or perspective (...) Another strategy adopted by reluctant bilinguals is to carve a space within the new discourse in which to pursue traditional professional concerns. This involves arguing that market related activities can have a duality of purposes, where one set of purposes is commercial, and another educational, and that, approached in the right way, the two can be reconciled. Thus a number of senior managers talked about the positive side of marketing (...) Linked to this is a tendency for senior managers to distinguish between acceptable forms of marketing which do not involve compromising traditionally -held educational values and principles and unacceptable forms of marketing, which do (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, pp102-103).

The relationships between educational institutions and the market are in fact extremely complex. Among other reasons for this complexity, four essential factors stand out. In the first place, there is the influence of cultural and political traditions, which explains why in certain countries there is little support for a direct appeal to market logic as a means of restructuring schools. In southern-European countries, for example, as has already been mentioned, reforms are viewed more euphemistically, as necessities arising from the modernization, diversification and openness of the educational systems (Derouet & Dutercq 1992; Afonso, 1999; Dias, 1999). Secondly, in spite of recognition of global societal influences, local considerations cannot be underestimated: the specific nature of the local "market" and the reputation of the schools. The attitude of local actors is recognized as playing an important role in the process of school restructuring. Indeed, empirical research has shown great diversity in the reactions of schools to pressure to "marketize" education, even producing ways of resisting this pressure.

Thirdly, we should not forget the loosely-coupled nature of schools and, in particular, the gulf which exists between organisational and pedagogic functions. Thus, identification with the new administrative philosophies and

procedures seems to be restricted to the management team, and a small group of "emergent professionals" (Wallace, 1992; Pollard *et al*, 1994; Power *et al*, 1997). The main activities of the school are thus to a large extent shielded from the new political and societal persuasions.

Finally, it should also be remembered that the closing years of the twentieth century were marked by a frenzy of activity in the process of educational reconstruction and a resulting "epidemic" of educational policies. This "hurly-burly of change" (Formosinho & Ferreira, 1998) helped to divide the attention and investment of social actors. It also increased the "schizophrenic" potential of organisations and the possibility of different lifeworlds co-existing in the same school (Laughlin, 1991; Ball, 1992).

Despite these reservations, there is every indication that, in most economically advanced capitalist societies, there has been an important redistribution of power among the main local actors: teachers, headteachers and parents (Gewirtz *et al* 1995; Menter *et al*, 1997; Power *et al*, 1997; Smyth *et al*, 2000; Van Zanten, 2002). In this process the advocacy of consumer rights played an important role (Almond, 1994; Brown, 1994; Dale & Robertson, 2001; Whitty, 2002).

Family involvement in schools: expression of citizenship or sovereignty of the consumer?

The power of parents to participate in decisions involving their children's education constitutes a virtually undisputed right in contemporary societies (Davies *et al*, 1989; Laughlin, 1994). However, legal sanction is a relatively recent reality. For decades, parents were essentially "partners", working in a supporting role with professional educators (Anderson, 1993; Vincent, 1996, 2000):

- helping with school work and creating favourable conditions for its completion;

- instilling values and attitudes conducive to school achievement ("spending time with the children, talking to them about what they did at school, [generating] pride in work well done, application and moderate ambition"; Marques, 1995, p24).
- encouraging specific cultural practices (e.g. visits to museums, exhibitions, concerts).

Through these forms of interaction, family involvement in the school became a sign of "good practice" and a decisive factor in pupils' school success, besides also being regarded as a valuable contribution to the development of democracy (Marques, 1991, Davies *et al*, 1993, Abrantes, 1994). Some authors went so far as to consider that family involvement might serve to counteract the "reproductive" logic of the school:

> Contrary to the contentions of Marxist educational sociologists in the sixties and seventies, school success does not depend principally on differences in social class, but on a broad set of interacting variables that includes familiarity with the school culture and the acquisition of attitudes favourable to success... [These] are to be found in all walks of life and in any case constitute powerful variables in educational achievement (Marques, 1993, p24).

Despite such convictions, the major forms of school/family relations existing in recent decades have proved to be highly vulnerable to the patterns of social, cultural and ethnic inequality persisting in contemporary societies (Slee *et al*, 1998; Reay, 1998, 2001; Silva, 2001; Vincent, 2001; Van Zanten, 1996, 2002).

The educational advantages associated with family participation in the school were not, however, the only reasons behind the advocacy of the parental involvement that appeared in the sixties. Such practices were even presented by some authors as a way of combating the "paternalism" and the bureaucratisation of public institutions:

> The critiques [of public sector professionals] have been concerned to expose the "myth" that these professionals are benign agents involved in relationships with clients and unaffected by the structural inequalities which are embedded in wider society and based on class, ethnicity and/or gender". Welfare state professionals have been castigated for their

> paternalism, their belief that the services they provide were benign and in the best interests of their clients (Vincent, 2000, p42).

This critique led to a variety of experiments in the field of school/community relations, both in the more developed western countries and in countries of the Third World (Davies *et al*, 1981; Benavente *et al*, 1987). In some cases, alternative pedagogic concepts were developed whose influence is still far from dying out (for example, the Paulo Freire model). Generally speaking, however, this first phase in the opening up of school/community relations was powerless to avoid a strong social bias. In addition, the community voice was frequently ineffectual against the power of managerial/professional authority, which placed families in an essentially supporting role in relation to the school and the professionals (Vincent, 1996; Silva, 2001).

Criticism of the welfare state and its professionals reappeared in the mid-eighties, although this time virtually devoid of any perspective of radical change in the patterns of social inequality (see Chapter 1). Neo-liberal concepts in education are in fact based on an individualistic attitude "[that] denies the effect of class, ethnicity and gender stratifications, and instead maintains that everyone has an equal chance to succeed, and responsibility for that success (or failure) is their own" (Vincent, 1996, p36). The citizen is basically regarded as a consumer who should be responsible (and answerable) for the choices he makes. The role of the State is principally to break down the barriers to free market operation: attendance of schools within the area of residence, public spending based on criteria of a "bureaucratic" or social nature (number of pupils, positive discrimination).

When the system is deregulated, the citizen-consumer is encouraged and legitimated to act in line with the principles that, according to the attitudes under analysis, are supposed to characterize him: self-interest, rationality and utility. His reasoned choices will help, it is argued, towards the growth of quality schools and the extinction of the rest (or restructuring).

Consumer opinion, to which neo-liberal attitudes claim to give voice, is however very different from the voice of the citizen which featured in the concerns of the progressive educators of the seventies and eighties. It is a voice which resounds mainly *between* educational institutions rather than *within* them. It is the voice of those who choose/evaluate rather than construct/participate. Indeed, the main strength of the citizen-consumer lies neither in the power of his voice nor in any collective action which he may set in motion. It lies rather in the consequences of the choices he "collectively" makes. It should be stressed, however, that the "efficacy" of neo-liberal perspectives does not depend solely on the more or less automatic functioning of the legal mechanisms institutionalised in recent decades: choice, vouchers system. Part of the influence exerted by these views, perhaps the more significant, is cultural. It is cultural changes which pave the way for and consolidate transformations effected on the social and political plane. This is why theories concerning the sovereignty of the consumer are so closely tied up with the "discursive construction of good" or "appropriate parenting" (Vincent, 2000; Gewirtz, 2001). Indeed, while not actually initiating this process of construction, current managerial concepts have clearly encouraged it. The roles (and obligations) of mothers and fathers are today almost infinite, and susceptible to constant investment and improvement.

In theory it is possible for anyone to become a good parent (Vincent, 2000). Failure to do so is therefore clearly a personal matter. And this is why the concepts behind parental choice of schools, and other forms of "marketization" of education, have repercussions which transcend the educational field:

- they alter the frontiers between state and family, putting more responsibility on the family and taking off some of the pressure on the political system;
- they make possible a conservative redefinition of the relations between the state, the local authorities and the teachers. Indeed, the increased power of the consumer has on various occasions gone hand in hand with

a loss of influence on the part of teachers and local authorities (Sarmento *et al*, 1999; Lima, 2001).

Despite this apparent neutrality, neo-liberal concepts have proved to be powerful tools for social and political reform.

Finally, it should be stressed that the new administrative guidelines are far from benefiting all consumers on equal terms:

> Parental choice policies overlook the way in which individuals differ markedly in their ownership of social and economic resources: differences which profoundly affect their ability to compete in the educational market (Vincent, 1996, p35).

Thus the new parental choice policies will very probably lead to a strengthening of the old social hierarchies (Lauder *et al*, 1999; Derouet, 2000, 2002, Ball, 2003). Moreover, even if the issue of inequality did not exist, which is far from being the case, parental choice would always be curbed by the possibility of the more popular schools making their own selection of pupils.

In conclusion, in spite of the abstract rhetoric of empowerment which accompanies the new educational policies, the latter contain undeniable risks for the majority of local actors: teachers, local authorities, families with fewer cultural and social resources. Furthermore, the "marketization" of education would seem to have consequences which reach far beyond the educational system itself.

> The growing tendency to base aspects of social issues more and more on the notion of consumer rights instead of the rights of citizens, implies more than the movement of public educational systems towards individual schools competing in the client market. While apparently responding to criticism of the impersonal and over-bureaucratic service provided by the welfare state, it also alters primordial aspects of political decision-making, taking it from the public into the private sector with potentially significant consequences in terms of social justice. Atomised decision-making within an already stratified society may appear to ratify the concept of equal opportunities for all, whereas in fact it reduces the possibility of the collective struggles which may help those less able to help themselves (Whitty, 1996, p127).

I shall now examine to what extent the new neo-liberal orientations outlined above have been reflected in Portuguese primary schools.

The Democratic Management of Portuguese Schools

In this section I shall analyse the ongoing changes in the processes of formal participation in the schools under analysis. In this way, it is my intention to illustrate the contingent nature, both historically and culturally, of some of the basic concepts of contemporary political discourse: "leadership", "participation", "school culture"; and also to describe and document the beginning of a process of comprehensive redefinition of the role of leadership in Portuguese schools.

School Board: Functions, Policies and Practices

Contemporary literature abounds with references to strong and charismatic leaders capable of promulgating and imposing their vision and sense of mission. This image could not be further from the legal framework defining the running of Portuguese schools during the democratic management of schools (see table 13).

Table 13 -Principal Organs and Functions

Functions of the School Board	Functions of the Headteacher
To draw up the school regulations; To adjudicate, as far as the law permits, matters of importance to the school; To draw up and submit to a higher authority proposals for dealing with problems outside their legal jurisdiction; To collaborate with the regional offices.	To represent the school; To preside over teachers' meetings; To decide on matters delegated by the Board, or in an emergency; To carry out the deliberations of the school board; to oversee the discipline of the school; To collaborate with the regional offices.

A study of Table 13 shows the formal subordination of the head teacher in relation to the body of teachers comprising the school board. The teachers not only elect the head teacher but hold, collectively, practically all the responsibilities delegated in schools. The head teacher is little more than a figurehead, liasing with higher authorities and making decisions in an emergency.

Teachers interviewed attested that, broadly speaking, schools function according to the power relationship shown in Table 13.

> The head teacher hasn't got a class, so she takes on other responsibilities. She will do a job which it is impossible for the others to do because we have a class, *but she always asks the others what they think,* i.e. us! In some situations she does enjoy a degree of autonomy. For example, she can organise a school visit and *then* ask us what we think, or *even* buy materials. In the end she is like the administrator of a block of flats, but with some autonomy (Adriana, associate teacher, Main School, my emphasis).

The head teachers themselves were unanimous in recognising the "hierarchical primacy" of the school board:

> In this model, the role of headteacher is quite restricted. The headteacher has to pass all the issues to the school board. And the most difficult questions lie with the delegate (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

> Because of current legislation, there is little regard for the power of a headteacher (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

Although the supremacy of the school board may be attributed to the lack of official power held by head teachers, it is not the only factor involved in defining the headteacher role. There were, in fact, during the period of the research, other factors which contributed to this definition:

- *system of representation*

Having been elected by their peers, directors saw themselves more as their representatives than as their superiors (interview with Rita, April 1999). Moreover, given the general disinterest in organisational aspects (see Chapter 3), the head found it difficult to be seen and accepted as the representative of

the general interests of the organisation. Indeed, some teachers referred explicitly to the head teacher's job as "being there to support us", "not siding with the parents" and "not paying too much attention to parents" (extracts from interviews, Main School).

- bureaucratic and centralist tradition:

The marked educational centralization of the Portuguese educational system has always stood in the way of strong local leaderships (Lima, 1992). This state of affairs remained unchanged after the democratic transition, given that it created an anti-authoritarian climate which, albeit for different reasons, was equally a barrier to the assertion of local leadership. Indeed, this anti-authoritarian climate, at times considered excessive, is often referred to in interviews:

> Most heads just follow the mainstream (Teresa, senior teacher, Park School).

> As head teachers go, I've seen them all. But most of them just go with the tide (Maria, associate teacher, Main School).

In the period prior to 1998, the lack of special qualifications for the post of head teacher, also contributed to the supremacy of school board in the local context.

The Definition of "School" Policies

The importance attributed to the school board, by the teachers and headteachers interviewed, raised certain hopes and expectations that it would constitute an effective forum for deciding school policies. This possibility was also the most likely explanation for the high participation -rates, at school board meetings, revealed in a recent survey of primary teachers in the city of Lisbon (Borges *et al*, 1998). The results of this survey, furnished by the Lisbon Municipality for the purposes of this study, show a remarkable degree of involvement on the part of teachers in defining issues essential to the everyday life of the school: aims, rules, assessment (see Table 14).

Table 14 - Teacher participation in decision-making

Area	Rate of participation %
Educational aims	85
Grading	84
School rules	77
Disciplinary problems	75

However, it would come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Portuguese schools, that the impression conveyed by the above table contrasts sharply with the organisational reality identified in the present study. Indeed, a systematic observation of various school board meetings leads to the conclusion that most of the issues mentioned in Table 14 were barely touched upon and, when they were, it was on the most superficial level (criticising or suggesting changes to wording or punctuation, disagreement with the use of certain expressions). The "high" or "very high" level of participation boiled down, in most cases, to listening point by point while the school regulations were read out - school project, school area project, rules - in an attitude of marked indifference (field-notes of July 98, Main school; fieldnotes of October 99, Park school). Many of those interviewed also admitted their indifference to "the type of issue that never gets off the ground" (Celeste, contract teacher, Main School).

Consequently, attempts to set up working groups to perform organisational tasks always met with stubborn resistance. This resistance was so strong that some teachers (Park school) even went as far as to check with the regional office the requirement to cooperate on this kind of task, in spite of this attitude being considered a breach of loyalty to colleagues on the Board. Strangely, the task of redesigning school policies proved to be even less appealing than that of performing mundane administrative tasks:

> So I started to see that there was one colleague to check the phone bills and another those of the photocopier. And I thought, *I'll be last,* because I was last in, and that's the normal

> pecking order. So as I knew that *nobody wanted that project thing* [the school project], *I volunteered.* Besides, I didn't want anything that would take up the whole year, because I knew I was going to have a lot to do at the ESE (training course). It suited me to have something I could *get out of the way* now, in September, and that I wouldn't have to do all year. So I did everything in September. *I explained what I was doing at two teachers' meetings, but nobody even commented* (Hermínia, senior school, Park School).

Thus, somewhat ironically, one could go so far as to say that participation in the overall policy-making of the school is more than "very high". It is excessive. It is excessive because it is to a large extent required - by law or by a public discourse which emphasises organisational change - in a world of respondents in which the values of "restricted professionality" are clearly those that prevail (see Chapter 3). The discrepancy between the results of the municipal survey and those of the present study does, however, provide valuable insights for an understanding of the professional culture of Portuguese teachers and of the workings of the Portuguese educational system in the last decade.

In the first place, while claiming a high level of participation in matters in which their decision-making power is virtually nil, given the strict regulations by which they are bound, the teachers interviewed revealed a high level of acceptance of their dependence. This phenomenon has already been identified in other studies (Afonso, 2000) and is likewise clearly evident in the whole process of drafting and approving "school documents", which frequently reiterate word for word objectives, proposals and considerations lifted from the current (centrally defined) legislation, regulations and curricula.

Secondly, it shows that the change in political discourse that took place in Portugal in the mid-eighties, in the sense of setting a higher value on local actors and ventures, had little effect on the attitudes and practices of primary teachers. Legislative initiatives of a compulsory nature - school project, plan of activities, regulations which were designed to produce less segmented educational activity, had almost no effect on teachers. The latter had a very

sketchy knowledge of the school's regulations and internal directives, the drafting of which they would generally leave to the head teacher. The principal rules were not even handed to all teachers: after their reading and approval, they were simply filed away. They could not even be consulted or referred to by the generality of teachers. Their use was restricted to the head and deputy head who, on occasion, would make them available to the administration - central or local - and to certain important social partners. The influence of these documents on the day-to-day life of the school was virtually nil:

> All schools *have to have a project,* don't they? But the teachers are busy all year *teaching their syllabus,* and just don't have time *for that sort of thing* (Silvana, associate teacher, Main School).

> I heard about the school project from colleagues. I didn't read it. For me it's something remote and very hard to get to grips with (Vanessa, contract teacher, Main School).

> I have very little to do with the school project [learning to be by being]. Sometimes I talk about it when dealing with *instances of misbehaviour among the children* (Sonia, contract teacher, Main School).

There were also cases in which the favoured *modus operandi* was in total contrast to the goals which the regulations sought to achieve: the school project, for example, which ideally should unite the teachers around a common theme or problem, was often split up into different topic areas which the teachers approached in a completely autonomous fashion.

> The school has its project, the core of which is the environment. And it's *divided.* My class has the pedagogic garden; another year chose the sanctuary, and so it goes on (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

> So we *divided up the project.* There are lots of different sides to the problem, like the garden, horticulture, audiovisuals, etc... ... so depending on each teacher's likes and dislikes, *they are free to choose what they want to do* (Barbara, senior teacher, Park School).

In other cases, like Avenue School, the educational project, "Learning better from the community" amounted to a total negation of the practice of the

organisation: so it was not surprising that it failed to lead to any concrete results (see "family relations").

It may therefore be concluded that the concepts of educational project and school autonomy, in spite of their intrinsic objectives, failed to generate new ways of organising work, based on the idea of making actors participate in the running of affairs in which they were actually involved (see also Estevão, 1995). The attitude of teachers towards overtures made with the aim of encouraging more "active" participation in the running of schools - projects, plans, regulations - was not so very different from the one displayed towards other rulings: they complied with the formalism, with the minimum of effort.

In some cases there is even the *in toto* adoption of documents produced by other schools. The regulations governing Main school, for example, were requested by another school that was awaiting an inspection:

> Two colleagues from school L came and asked for them because they didn't have any and were afraid the inspectors would raise problems (Rita, headteacher, Main school).

There are also cases in which documents are drawn up in their entirety by anyone who shows a flair for the job:

> We have a colleague who is very good at these things (plan of activities), so we leave them to her. She drafted this plan (Cristina, headteacher of pre-school annex to Main School).

This kind of organisational pseudo-participation was generally widespread. Sarmento, in a study which included three primary schools in the North of the country, identified the same phenomenon, which he called the "ceremonial" function of the school board. Through its ceremonial role, which is apparent above all in matters relating to school organisation, the school becomes a "venue for normative reproduction", "legally sanctioning the decisions assigned to it by the norm (the State)" (Sarmento, 1997, p477). Viewed in this way, the high levels of organisational participation mentioned by Portuguese teachers in the survey conducted by the Lisbon Municipality should be interpreted as indicating dependence and indifference rather than autonomy. Indeed, the uniformity of the results gathered from the 44 schools in the study

(implicit in the high overall rates recorded) was already an early indicator of the organisational pseudo-participation of the respondents in the survey.

The central focus of deliberation

The deliberative activity of school boards thus concerns itself, contrary to what might be inferred from an analysis of Table 13, essentially with "peripheral" pedagogic and curricular issues (parties, study visits, *story -telling).* This is the overwhelming conclusion reached from observation and from testimonies gathered in interviews. In these testimonies the teachers invariably highlighted "study visits, outings, exhibitions, problem pupils" (Margarida, associate teacher, Main School). Also mentioned, although less frequently, were matters relating to "class distribution of pupils", "book-purchases", "choice of materials",, "invitations", "municipal projects", "timetables" and "cleaning of LTA rooms". In Main school there was also a definite "bias" in favour of discussion of problems arising from relations with the community ("issues raised by parents" and problems with LTA).

This data confirms the results obtained by Sarmento (1997) in the three school analysed in the Braga district. In this study, extra-curricular activities were also identified as the main focus of school board deliberation, albeit with variable ratings in the respective schools: 91% in the Serra do Fojo school, 90% in the Civic Centre school and 58% in Aldeia do Rio (Sarmento, 1997, p475).

Functions and practices

My research also showed that the organization of these periodic joint activities, despite being a central theme at teachers' meetings, did not follow any concerted, detailed programme. There was no prior defining of aims or common themes. Thus, collective preparation amounted to no more than a verbal description and schedule of activities individually drafted by each teacher. This is why it was noted in the previous chapter that the "collective "

was perceived as nothing very different from a random collection of individual contributions, with little or no cohesion. Moreover, suffice it for one teacher to express disapproval of a joint activity under discussion for it to be abandoned forthwith, or else left to individual decision-making. For example, a proposal to celebrate Women's Day was rejected merely because one of the teachers said she "didn't agree with all this talk about women" (teachers' meeting, Main school, Sept. 99).

Collective decisions thus served, as has been stated before, to safeguard diversity rather than to promote the integration and coordination of educational practices (see also chapter 3).

Summarizing observations made of teachers' meetings, it may be stated that they played essentially:

- an *informative role* (publication of new legislation, correspondence, school and cultural events, regulations). Almost half the meetings at Main school and roughly a third at Egas Moniz school - were devoted to the imparting of information.
- a *political role,* with two different purposes (to endorse and preserve the "sacrosanct" nature of work done by teachers in their classrooms; to exert some degree of political control over the influence wielded by the head and certain senior teachers).

The teachers' meeting was rarely used, however, as a forum for the political resolution of internal conflicts. There were, basically, only three instances in which this might occur:

- the excessively biased behaviour of certain teachers who, in deciding the composition of their classes, went against the strategic interests of other senior teachers or associate teachers with several years of service in the school. One of the teachers at Park School, for example, organized her classes in such a way as not to take a single deprived pupil, while the ex-head was left with no fewer than seventeen. The ensuing argument dragged on over three teachers' meetings in succession.

- instances of apparent favouritism towards certain teachers, due to their participation in projects considered to be important (like the case of Project 3L, discussed in the previous chapter).
- reaction to the exclusion of teachers from certain public ceremonies involving dignitaries from the local or central administration (or else inclusion considered to be too low-profile).

It should also be stressed that the formal equality of power among teachers does not prevent the influence of the various groups from being highly differentiated: "there is a scale. I think that the opinion of teachers who are permanent is more valuable than that of those who aren't." (J.T Main school, see also Chapter 3).

This tension among teachers is visible in the seating arrangements during School Board meetings. At Main School, this was usually as follows :

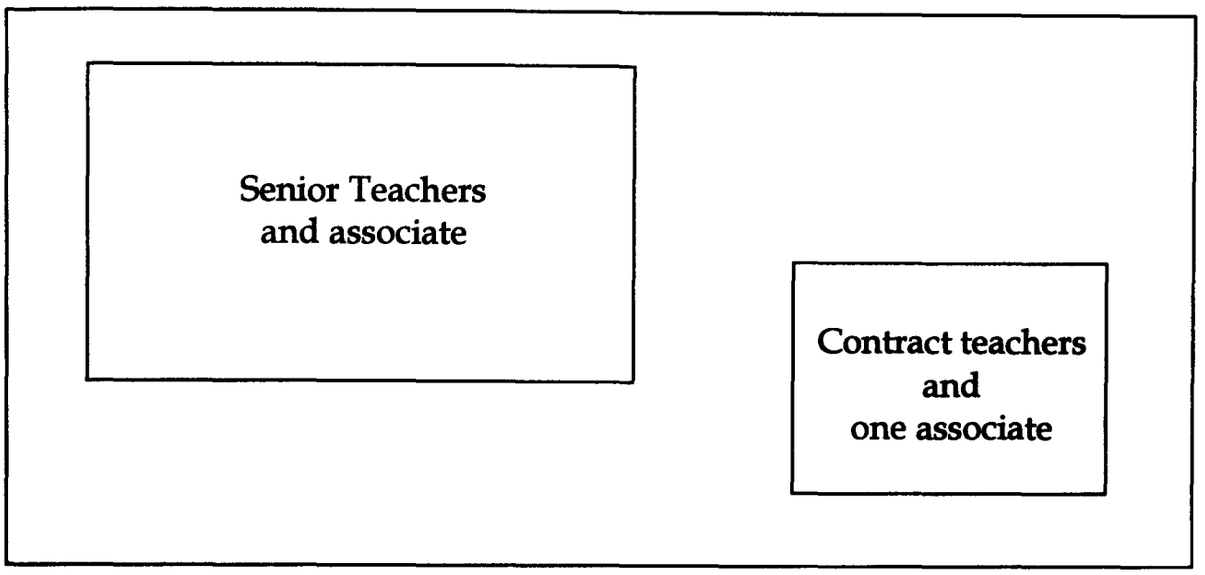
Figure 1 - School Board meetings (Main School)

Deputy Head	Headteacher		
Senior teacher (without classes)			contract teachers
Senior teachers (with classes)			contract teachers
Associate teachers	Special needs teacher	Associate teachers	Door

In addition, the contract teachers at Main school specifically mentioned in the interviews that they saved seats for each other at teachers' meetings. This proximity and unity made for greater confidence and a stronger defensive position (this group is relatively significant in number).

At Park school the age and status segregation was even more apparent. In the first year of the analysis, young and new teachers sat at a separate table during these meetings. An associate teacher, who acted as group leader, also sat there (see figure 2).

Figure 2 - School Board Meeting (Park school)



The cyclical nature of the decision making process

From observation of the procedures of school boards over a period of some eighteen months, it was also possible to record the cyclical nature of the decisions taken. The beginning of the school year was mainly taken up with tasks relating to the organisation of the school (classes, rooms, timetables, schedules of activities). The in-between periods focus on extra-curricular activities (visits, exhibitions, parties), while the ends of term are reserved for pupil assessment. At the close of the school year - the end of June - there was a return to organisational issues.

In an attempt to summarize the issues under analysis, it may be concluded that the general tenor of teachers' meetings, both from their cyclical quality and from the very nature of the debates, betrays a high degree of ritualization. While in theory the teachers' meeting should represent the fountainhead of

local educational policies and initiatives, in accordance with the political discourse subsequent to 1986, it in fact emerges as being more informative than deliberative. Although this may be in line with the scant authority it enjoys, it is no less clear that there are areas of local "joint action" which go unexploited (in the realms of pedagogy, teacher development, school and cultural events Government initiatives designed to promote whole school planning and work in schools, defined in the wake of educational reform (1986), seem to have failed dismally to arouse the enthusiasm and support of the teachers.

The new political directives contributed, however, as will now be shown, towards:

- the transformation of certain professional profiles, with particular reference to that of the head teacher;
- the emergence of new social and educational partners, who came to play an increasingly important role in the running of schools (families, companies, associations).

The Redefinition of the Role of Head Teacher

In order to analyse the process outlined above in greater depth, I shall then refer to the changes effecting the role of head teacher during the final phase of *democratic school management.*

Traditional Duties and Roles

The main duties of head teachers involved, in their own words, a lot of work and little "responsibility".

> A head teacher's job involves a lot of work with little responsibility [decision]. There's a lot to do, a lot of paper work, but it can't be said that the head teacher has a lot of freedom to make decisions. And you know why? Because the really major issues have to be referred to the regional education office. And everything one does has to be presented at teachers' meetings (Paulo, headteacher, Park school).

This lack of decision-making power did not mean lack of commitment to the running of the school, which, in all the cases observed, was carried out with the

utmost zeal and dedication. It was the head teachers who spent more hours in the school during term-time, who frequently gave up their lunchtimes to get work done, and who were present in the school during much of the "holidays". Observation would indicate that Portuguese head teachers, in spite of not enjoying the concentration of power and authority revealed in other studies, show similar "deeply-felt self-expectations" (Nias *et al*, 1989). The service ethic, an ingredient of the professional culture of Portuguese teachers, led to an unquestioning acceptance of the duties inherent in the running of a school, despite the fact that these were rewarded neither in terms of remuneration nor of career advancement (and sometimes, in fact, to their detriment). Dedication to the school was not, however, except in the case of heads who had held the office for many years, associated with the sense of "ownership" described in studies on school leadership (Nias *et al*, 1989; Southworth, 1995). There was constant reference to the teaching body and, especially, to the school board. Head teachers also displayed no visible aspirations to the educational leadership suggested by the literature on the efficacy of schools (Beare *et al*, 1997), nor to quality control of their colleagues' work:

> I don't think we have that legal power [supervision of colleagues' work]. That's the role of the Inspectorate. They're the ones with the power to intervene in the classroom (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

> At this level of education, the head can't interfere in the classroom. And if I tried, they'd immediately ask where there was anything in writing to that effect. Generally teachers are autonomous and responsible for the methods they use with their pupils. That's why I don't say anything. I just warn them, 'Be careful, because we might get an inspector round (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

The sphere of influence of the head teacher, was, in fact, very limited. Besides this, leadership required diplomacy skills and self-sacrifice in equal proportions. It boiled down, essentially, to "leading by example" (Nias *et al*, 1989): being present at all times, always arriving earlier and leaving later than other members of staff, having an "open-door" policy for colleagues, showing

competence in executing administrative tasks, gaining the confidence of superiors, promoting the good name of the school through acts of public representation (concerns shown, in particular, by the heads of Main School and Park School).

Even among established leaders, the exercise of authority over colleagues had to be handled with consummate tact; it was always indirect and based on appeals to teacher professionalism. Even blatant violations of the law - late arrival at school in the mornings, lack of playground supervision, leaving school during the break - bring only mild rebuke. No one was totally bound by the law; those who do not fulfil their obligations merely receive appeals to their better judgement.

> Everyone knows the day they are on playground duty. And I'm just mentioning this because we're all adults. I don't want to have to keep telling people. They know perfectly well when it's their day outside. It's one of the tasks we're expected to do. The teacher who doesn't go to the playground takes responsibility for her actions. Going out for coffee is the same. I don't say the teacher can't go. I just say it's their responsibility (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

Some took exception to even this form of intervention, especially at Park school, with its staff of mainly senior teachers: "tell the father that if he's got a problem, he can bring it to me" was the usual reaction to criticism.

This is why the heateacher of Park school only adopted a firm stance over particularly pressing problems, for which the head might be held jointly responsible: consistent lateness, fictitious increase of pupil numbers to keep places in the school:

> At the same time, the head can't turn a blind eye to everything, because when there's an inspection he can't pretend he didn't notice or didn't say anything. For example, in the case of keeping places free in classes, there's always someone who adds a few, and inspectors go through things like that with a fine-tooth comb. That's why the head has to draw attention to these things (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

Apart from such exceptional circumstances, the heads' duties were organised essentially around tasks of an administrative or bureaucratic nature:

> have to deal with correspondence, statistics, accounts. The most arduous is the correspondence; there are stacks of it, which I put in bundles. And the accounts! There should be a teacher-treasurer, but no one wants the job because it takes up so much time (Paulo, Main School).

> What do they [teachers] expect of us? Work. They want us to do the paperwork, take their classes when they have a doctor's appointment, and chair the meetings. That's really all it amounts to. Because when it comes to complying with timetables and carrying out duties, they don't like it. Sometimes I go into the teachers' room and see them lounging around instead of being on playground duty. But if I say something, they get annoyed (Adélia, deputy head Main School).

> I do the school accounts, the subsidies, the milk orders, all the correspondence ... (Carlota, Avenue School)

> You ask me what I did when I was a head? Well, I managed the municipal subsidies. The local authority sent us the subsidies, and in our case there were subsidies for food for deprived pupils, for administration and cleaning, for things like stationery and software, and for didactic and pedagogic material. I also supervised the composition of classes at the beginning of the year, and kept the registers (Francisca, ex-head, Park school).

These descriptions of the role of head teacher strangely resemble those of a civil servant, whose job is mainly administrative and who has no authority to intervene in areas concerned with this specialist field: in this case, the pedagogic and educational domain. Running a school boiled down to very limited duties in the field of organisational co-ordination: convening and chairing meetings, planning and organising certain general school activities and exercising the minimum of hierarchical authority. This profile partially confirms the conclusions reached in a study made over ten years ago concerning the management of primary schools (Clímaco *et al*, 1988):

> The day-to-day running of most primary schools takes place at subsistence level. When the role of pedagogic organisation and leadership is taken away from management, all that remains as its *raison d'être* are administrative duties, while other important aspects of school organisation, like pedagogic and institutional matters, are swept under the carpet. (...) The image of the

> irector as the all-powerful, centralising, inspectorial representative of the central power [during the dictatorship] has given way to the myth of collective management - pacific and without individual leaderships (Clímaco *et al*, 1988, p89).

This sense of collective leadership was so strong that even when interesting projects were produced in the school, the heads would tend to attribute them to characteristics of the teaching staff rather than take any of the credit for themselves:

> They say that the head teacher's role is very important because he should be the stimulator, the one who motivates. But this really depends on the teachers, because I think after so many years I'm still the same - your basic personality doesn't change. And this school has gone through a lot of different phases during my time as head [12 years]. The school used to do a lot of very fine work, but nowadays you can't get anything done. Even the educational project is a mere formality: it's drawn up on paper at the beginning of the year, and the content distributed among the various school years. After that there are a few teachers who do the odd bits and pieces, and that's about it. It depends a lot on the group. (Joana, head teacher of Gama School, second phase of the study)

> This school is very different from the one I'd visualised and from the one it used to be. It depends a lot on the groups. In recent years the school has almost entirely recruited teachers who are just passing through, because the school is well situated and the pupils easy to manage. And this changes the corporate dynamic of the school (Rita, head teacher, Main School).

The current research identified, however, three main differences in relation to the scenario described by Clímaco *et al* (1988):

- an increasing accumulation and diversification of the tasks in which the head teacher is involved;
- a significant development in the role of the headteacher, especially in social and institutional terms;
- a strengthening, albeit still not very appreciable, in the intervention of the head teacher in the pedagogic and organisational spheres.

nges signal, as we shall see, the beginning of the erosion of the "myth of collective management" and certain gains in the field of "individual leadership". In summary, they represent the beginning of a transition from the phase when the head was seen as a "teacher among teachers" (see below) towards managerial forms of organisation.

The new role of head teachers

According to the study carried out by Clímaco *et al* (1988) the accumulation of administrative tasks and contact hours by head teachers did not present a serious problem: "the head teacher's job is not a very arduous one. A bit more paperwork, a bit less (...). The task of running a school is not very time-consuming. Administrative work is not very demanding (...) The workload is not excessive. I do all the paperwork"(p68).

Fifteen years down the road from this study, all the heads and ex-heads interviewed referred to the diversity and volume of work with which they were confronted daily. These tasks interfered in one way or another with their private lives and their teaching:

- by forcing them to redefine pedagogic strategies and to accumulate work to do at home ("a head is always being called out of class for one reason or another. And I can't just abandon the children. So I make worksheets, but then I have to correct them. I've got twenty pupils, so I spend at least two hours a day correcting worksheets. That's what overloads me most" (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).
- by causing greater discipline problems and lack of concentration on the part of the pupils. ("the pupils were used to me giving them a lot of attention and affection. And when I became head I could no longer give that attention. The saving grace was that they were already in the third year and very well trained." (Francisca, ex-head, Park School).
- by leaving them less time for their families ("now my husband never gets home before eight. Sometimes he stays at school until eleven or

night. I've been known to phone the school because I'm afraid that something has happened to him. I'm always nagging him and saying 'Go on then, carry on working like that! At the end they'll give you a medal!" (Paula, Park School teacher and Paulo's wife).

- by creating a situation of permanent stress, especially in larger schools, due to the build-up of work pending. ("I still haven't done the accounts for the last tax year. I'm doing single-handed what in independent schools would be done by three or four people." ('Paulo, headteacher Park School).

The significant increase in management tasks between 1985 and 1999, which is the period spanning the fieldwork of the two studies, would not seem to be entirely due to changing administrative demands (although these too would seem to have increased, especially in the area of statistics). It would also be hard to explain, bearing in mind the patterns of collegiality described in the previous chapter, in terms of head teachers' greater involvement in pedagogic matters. Indeed, the evidence given by teachers and head teachers in interviews suggests, together with my observations and my analysis of the legislation, that changes in the roles of head teachers derive essentially from four important factors: greater parental involvement in schools; the increased presence of companies and services on the school premises (canteen, LTA, computer technology, language clubs); the creation of educational partnerships with the local community; and new social and institutional demands associated with the public image of the school (modernity, quality).

These recent phenomena have led in the first place to a very significant increase in the time the head teacher has to devote to direct or indirect contacts (letter, telephone) with the new social partners and services:

> The Municipality is always coming up with the Roda project (concerned with leisure-time activities). Then there's the Educational Theatre, which usually puts on a play at the end of the year. There are also the local Lisbon street parties at the end of the year and visits to Lumiar Palace. The Parish Council also phones a lot - in fact they've just phoned to see if I can find four classes to go and see a show they're putting on tomorrow. (...)

> ıen there are the companies. There are lots of companies interested in the school because of where it is located. Last year Opa gave us well over £1000 worth of materials. Tulicreme also gives us things'. And there are more. The Sugar Company, Jumbo, Modelo, Pepsodent send us useful posters and materials. 'Saidos da Casca' also sends us a monthly magazine for children. There's a lot of correspondence, too: from the Municipality, for a variety of reasons, sometimes because of changes in competitive selection processes; from the Catholic University with details of training courses and enrolment dates; from theatres offering free tickets for shows (...) We also get approached personally. For example, today I've had it all, from the police to trainee teachers requesting interviews (Paulo, head teacher, Park school).

It is interesting to note that the attitude towards such requests was not generally critical. Teachers tended to be more or less happy to accept offers of school materials or presents for the children from the large companies, although these amount to forms of advertising and marketing. On the other hand, they were against the school's playing an active role in such ventures (they disagree, for example, with the affixing in the school halls of publicity, even by local traders). The frontier between school and market was thus mainly established in terms of the role - passive or active - played by the school in the process. The content and objectives of this relationship were not in themselves called into question. Some campaigns were actually refused because of the poor quality of the presents - "Last year the Christmas presents from Peninsular were a disgrace" - rather than because of the attempt to entice young consumers which these offers represent (Field notes, Christmas 2000, Main School).

Well-located schools with an upper-middle class population were the ones most competed for by the companies (publishers, language and computer schools, photographers, leisure centres) and by social and educational partners (teacher-training institutes, university researchers, art and sports centres). I could see from my work as a "shadow" at Main School that Rita was frequently required to respond to various demands for her attention at the same time. While she talked to parents and partners at pre-arranged meetings, she was constantly interrupted by phone-calls and new requests for interviews. Some of these

would be passed on, because of obvious time constraints, to the deputy head or even a teacher with no contact hours (Natália), who lent a hand on such occasions. These observations confirm that the opening-up of schools to the community leads to widely differentiated opportunities of access to the "social capital" existing in local communities (Lauder *et al*, 1999; Dale & Robertson, 2001). Indeed, contrary to what neo-liberal concepts would seem to suggest, access to particular organisations and networks was by no means distributed on a classless basis:

> The universality of sociability and networks obscures their differential effectiveness: lower class networks are as plentiful and varied as middle class ones, but less productive of socially and economically successful outcomes (Portes, 1998).

Schools with a less privileged population have, as principal interlocutors, public institutions and in particular the local authorities. Middle and upper-class schools have a much broader network of contacts and partners, often long established. The testimonies of local parents and guardians confirm this observation:

> The educational community here is very limited. In other areas companies and traders all take part; everyone is ready to help the school. Here it's very restricted. *The community extends to the school, the municipality, a few parents and little else* (Joana, head teacher, Gama School).

> We don't usually get many presents for the children from companies. Sometimes we go to the theatre, but the tickets are given by the parish council (...) The school isn't involved in any project this year. In fact we get little information other than what we receive from the Ministry and the Municipality (Carlota, headeacher, Avenue Schools).

Main school, on the other hand, had numerous partnerships and protocols (Rita, headteacher, Main school) with both private and public institutions outside the jurisdiction of the local and regional administration:

- teacher-training institutes ("We have a protocol with the Higher School of Education, and a lot of their students do their teaching practice with

We also get trainees from the Physical Education Faculty"[University of Lisbon].

- training institutes in the artistic, sporting and socio-cultural fields ("For several years we have had a protocol with the Psycho-Social School, and we also have a trainee dancer and some P.E. classes").
- psychology faculties ("The parents' association got us a protocol with Lusofona, and they're sending us someone from the psychology department. Ana Margarida, from the Faculty of Educational Psychology and Sciences has also contacted us. She's coming to live here, and would like her teaching practices to be held in the school.").
- language schools ("For several years we have had a protocol with Communicate")
- Colleges of Further Education ("They sent us somebody to organise the library")
- companies involved in catering and leisure-time activities (Gertal, Festa).

The school is also frequently petitioned for the conducting of a variety of research projects, which serve to enhance its social network. In addition it receives support - financial donations, parties and gifts for the children, provision of certain services - from various entities and private individuals (e.g. Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Gertal, A Festa, Bollicao). Some of these forms of support were of a one-off nature, while others are more regular, thus considerably increasing the school's budget and resources.

Although one cannot deny the role played by individual directors in establishing a variety of social and professional networks - Rita enjoyed excellent interpersonal relationships ranging from the local community to social partners and the central administration - the socio-economic context of the school is no less important. It is this that determines to a large extent the greater or lesser involvement of partners and companies. Indeed, every year Main school receives various proposals of "cooperation", at the instigation of the companies themselves rather than of the head teacher. Some of these proposals,

, were what prompted her to start asking for "help" from the partners already established in the school:

> Certain catering companies were offering as much as two or three million Escudos to come here. That's what gave me the idea of asking for "help" from the ones already with us. I went to Rui (Gertal) and told him that improvements were needed in the canteen, and he also gives me meals for deprived children (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

The many overtures made to schools, particularly the larger ones with an upper-middle class population, all contribute to giving head teachers a social and institutional prominence unheard-of some decades ago (Clímaco & Rau, 1988). They also contribute to the spread of the idea that the separation of the roles of teacher and head teacher was practically inevitable:

> I consider that in a school like this one, with a high number of pupils and a location which makes it the target of a large number of companies, the head should be free of other duties [teaching]. She can't get a letter and just lay it aside to correct worksheets, can she? (Paula, deputy head, Park School).

> When I took the headship I said, all right, I'm going to be head, but I'm not going to give up my class. I used to love teaching. But it got very difficult and I was constantly being called out and having to interrupt my class. 'It's the Municipality on the phone, or the Parish Council, it's this, it's that, or a parent who wants to speak to you'. And I realized it was no good for me and no good for the pupils. So from that time on I stopped teaching and devoted myself to the school. And it was to my own detriment, in financial terms, because I also had to give up the private school where I was working at the time (Joana, head of Gama school, second phase of the study).

The educational reform of 1986 also helped to create a more favourable climate for the assertion of school leadership: it was based on a strong advocacy of the need for professionalization in management (Lima, 1995); it contributed to the introduction of managerial concepts and instruments which increased the scope of head teachers to intervene (educational project, plan of activities).

> I try to encourage my colleagues to help with the drafting of the school project, but end up doing it practically single-handed.

> here still isn't really a school spirit, and this is reflected in the drafting of the project. People still don't feel that the school is a place for everybody; they're still very focused on their own class and their own problems (Rita, head teacher, Main school).

> One of the things I began to do as head teacher was the educational project. I thought about the most important, most necessary areas for the school, and then I drafted the project. There was a theme of common interest, and that became the school's project. In a few years some marvellous work was produced (Joana, Gama school; second phase of the study).

> In the school I came from, it was the head who drafted and carried out the educational project. It shouldn't be like that, the project should be done by everybody. But it was very convenient (Hermínia, senior teacher, Park School).

As has already been said, teachers did not in fact show either great enthusiasm for, or great commitment to, this kind of activity:

> I'm going to be quite honest: the work I do in the classroom has very little to do with the school project. (Adriana, associate teacher, Main School).

> The projects are all either abandoned half-way through or never even get off the ground. (Joana, contract teacher, Main School).

> There's no real follow-up to projects: you hear about them at teachers' meetings, but then you never hear whether anyone took them on or not (Maria, associate school, Main School).

In spite of the limited participation by teachers, the project idea was disseminated by the central and regional administration and teacher training colleges and widely sanctioned as a sign of school modernity and efficacy (Costa, 1997). Besides this, educational projects [1] came to be used as a means of 'bartering' between schools and administration for the securing of certain 'perks': the continuation of teachers in schools (a request made annually by Main school), municipal subsidies for certain activities, reduced contact hours for teachers involved in projects.

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[1] The projects began on an extended thematic basis (e.g. The Discovery Of Lisbon [Main School]; "Protecting the Environment" [Park School]) in the early nineties, but gradually fell more in line with neo-managerial issues (see Chapter 5).

thus followed international trends in the organisational sphere, by adopting the "project" - school or company - as an attempt to mobilize local actors and modernise the education system (Costa, 1996).

The outside image of a school - with the administration, families and the professional community itself - came to depend largely on the projects and experiments with which it was connected, as well as with its promptness to participate in same. Head teachers became key figures in this process:

> This was a *pilot* school and extremely well known ... It was one of the *first* schools to apply for membership as an official Unesco school. The European Club had as many as four teachers on secondment. They were seconded for four or five years to set up the projects *The head was the great force behind the school. She was the one who brought in all the new ideas* (Aurora, deputy head, Pessoa School).

> I think what keeps this school in the forefront is the head herself. She's the one who urges us on for competitions and projects (Sara, associate teacher, Main School).

> What keeps this school going is the efforts of the head, even in the community (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

While there was increased prestige in projects and the people associated with them, especially head teachers and teachers on secondment, traditional working methods began to come in for criticism (see Chapter 3). Isolation in the classroom came to be considered as a sign of obsolete professionalism: "They still work in the old Portuguese way" (Armanda, deputy head, Main school). Teachers' professional autonomy was no longer undisputed. However, head teachers continued to have extremely limited powers. When groups of teachers were unwilling to participate in projects or the new school dynamics, head teachers shunned direct confrontation. They settled for a more subtle approach:

> So that the projects don't just die, I go around asking, quite nonchalantly, "And what about the school project? What are you thinking of doing this year? (Rita, head teacher, Main School).

In fact, the ability of the head teacher to influence decisions continued to be largely dependent on the nature of the issue under discussion. It was common

o fall in with the head teacher over matters of an administrative nature or those that did not require the cooperation of the teachers themselves (receiving guests, responding to questionnaires). Whenever teacher cooperation was required, however - for projects, parties, competitions, exhibitions - it was a different matter.

In these cases, headteacher influence was something that had to be fought for daily, through almost exemplary conduct and great dedication to the school. And it was exhausting work:

> For things to work [projects, competitions] you have to keep on top of the teachers...and even then you don't get much participation (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

> This year I feel really tired. For at least three years I've been the lone standard-bearer for the school. I don't feel inclined to do this very much longer (Rita, headteacher, Main School).

From this we may conclude that the redefinition of the role of head teachers that took place during the final phase of the democratic management of schools, while contributing towards their greater leadership in the schools and the local community, had no significant effect on power/authority relations in Portuguese primary schools.

The current research reveals, however, that during the period under analysis heads of Portuguese schools had little in common with the myth of the "transformational" leaders that runs through contemporary organisational literature. In exceptional cases, by dint of considerable self-sacrifice and great competence, they managed to be recognized by their colleagues as "primus inter pares". In the majority of cases, however - due to legislative directives and cultural traditions quite different from those prevailing in the English-speaking countries, taken as the main points of reference in the literature - their status was close to the status of "teachers among teachers" identified by Karastanje (1999) among Spanish directors:

> In most countries school staff have civil or semi-civil servant status ... All teachers are employees of the same employer, the

> :ntral government. This influences the position of school heads, whether their roles are that of "boss" or "teacher among teachers". The latter better describes the situation of school heads in Spain, where they are elected by fellow teachers for a period of three years, after which they return to their old teaching post (if not re-elected). It goes without saying that in this case they do not take the role of "employer" (p 38).

The situation identified in Portugal during the phase corresponding to democratic school management presents features very similar to those of Spain. However, there were also signs that a process of change was under way in teacher and headteacher work, the latter adopting a more "entrepreneurial" and neo-managerialist stance (a similar process has been identified in Spain; see Martin, 1999). In addition, some of the heads themselves were to a large extent persuaded by government perspectives on the renewal of schools and became important agents in this transformation (see also chapter 5).

Teacher "resistance", which has largely persisted in their patterns of limited collegiality, explains why this transformation has had far more of a cultural, discursive nature than a practical one. Traditional forms of teaching continued to prevail: ways of working with the children have not altered significantly. This was readily apparent from an analysis of Table 15, which is a summary of the results of a survey carried out in 44 primary schools (Borges *et al*, 1998; see The Research Process).

Table 15- Students participation in decision making

Activities	Rate of students participation in decision-making (%)
Classroom activities (suggestions)	4
Field trips (participation)	14
Parties / recreational activities	22
Disciplinary problems	29

Furthermore, unchanged practices are perfectly understandable when we consider that the political and educational directives issued during the education reform of 1986 did not include any significant investment in the area

r training (pedagogy). Thus, the educational projects carried out in the schools under analysis played essentially the role of a "legitimation ritual":

> The organisational image of the educational project as a legitimation ritual presupposes, therefore, the existence of a document whose practical application fails to convince the school actors, but which sets out to satisfy the demands and expectations of the various social, political and administrative agents who expect of the school an image of quality and efficacy (Costa, 1997, p108).

Pressure brought to bear on teaching practices was, as we shall now see, more the result of influence exerted by parents in particular situations than of the new managerial tools and philosophies. It was this influence which the teachers, particularly at Main school, regarded as a threat to their professional autonomy.

Parental Involvement in Schools: a Universe of Contrasts

The formal sanction of the right of the family to participate in primary schools was, as we have already mentioned, a slow and cautious process in Portugal. Indeed, it was only in the mid-eighties that the rights of parents' associations conferred after the revolution were extended to all levels of education. These rights were increased in 1990, providing fresh opportunities for parental intervention in schools: pedagogic bodies, extra-curricular activities, school projects (Silva, 1994). In spite of these possibilities, many primary schools, especially the smaller ones or those with a lower-class population, continue today to have no parents' association. Moreover, the present study has revealed that the relationship between primary schools and families is a world full of marked contrasts: there are cases in which the families are completely marginalized, while there are others in which the power of the "consumers" is hard to ignore. Because of these contrasts, each case will be analysed separately.

The Marginalization of Parents

parental marginalization, as a global institutional feature produced by the breakdown of communication between school and family, was identified in Avenida School. This school was attended entirely by deprived children from families whose way of life contrasts sharply with the traditional concepts of family. These differences were deeply felt by the school: "Many pupils are the children of prostitutes, living in rooms in boarding-houses" (Carlota, headteacher). Any relationship between the school and the community was fraught with difficulty: there were no meetings, nor was there any official or unofficial representation of parents. The latter rarely set foot in the school, even on their children's first day of classes. There was no compliance with legal provisions referring to parental participation. This total lack of communication was attributed to complete disinterest and irresponsibility on the part of the parents: "they don't come to the school, they're not interested in anything, not even in coming to get the reports" (Margarida, supply teacher at Avenue School).

Even so, certain incidents that occurred during the research - complaints by parents to the police, insults and threats outside the school - showed that in many cases parental disinterest was not as complete as teachers would like. In their own way, though the teachers might not approve, these parents were showing their awareness of the school life of their offspring. However, this did not take the form of pedagogic "supporter", as idealized by many teachers (Vincent, 1996, 2000); nor did it correspond to the teachers' idea of the family model (Davies *et al*, 1989). On the contrary, this intervention only occurred in extreme situations, with the parents defending their children in a manner which the teachers considered inappropriate and which produced fear and aversion.

Fear of family reprisals was, in fact, openly admitted in various interviews: "Nowadays I'm afraid even to raise my voice in the classroom. I'm afraid they'll tell their parents I was shouting at them" (Carlota, headteacher, Avenue School). This fear was, as far as one could see, one of the main reasons why the presence of families in the school was not encouraged. Whereas, the community showed that it was more than capable of intimidating the school, using the

ly meagre resources at its disposal: physical aggression, insults, appeals to the police. In some cases, it even got together to use "blackmail" on the school:

> Yesterday the neighbour of the mother I told you about [the one who complained that the teacher had beaten her daughter] came to say that if this went on, she too would try to get her daughter moved to another school. She said that I could then explain to the Regional Office why so many children were leaving the school (Carlota, headteacher, Avenue School).

It was not only fear, however, that moved teachers to keep parents away from the school. Indeed, families were not considered morally fit to bring up their own children ("this is an area of prostitution and drug-addiction"), let alone to collaborate in their schooling. The effort involved in bringing the parents to the school was therefore seen as a thankless task, with undeniably disastrous consequences: "I'm against autonomy. Can you imagine parents participating in the running of a school like this? If things are this bad already, they could only become a nightmare" (Carlota, headteacher, Avenue school).

In spite of the cultural arrogance underlying the teachers' attitudes to the families of their pupils, it is hard to see them, nevertheless, as the all-powerful professionals described in some of the literature advocating choice. Indeed, these teachers were in an extremely vulnerable position. The head teacher of Avenue School and a member of the ancillary staff were physically assaulted during the course of the present study. It was not a minor assault; one of them had to go for specialist medical treatment. Besides this, both felt uncomfortable with the state of parent teacher relationships and afraid to refer it to a higher authority. They feared being misunderstood by their superiors and that the affair would end up getting into the Press. This kind of anxiety was plainly visible in the daily life of the school.

The marginalization of families therefore emerged more as a symptom of the impotence of teachers in the face of a situation with which they felt unable to cope than as an assertion of professional power and authority.

part: Keeping the Frontiers Alive

At Park School there is a far milder version of the separation between school and family detected at Avenue School. The teachers meet the bureaucratic demands concerning information and parental involvement, but relations are far from being close. Indeed, the whole institutional conduct of the school seemed to be geared towards preserving a respectful distance between teachers and parents:

- parents waited for their children in the school yard, and could only enter the building after making a formal request to speak to a teacher (through an errand-boy);
- parents' association representatives only attended teachers' meetings for a few minutes, because the agenda was organised in such a way as not to "force" them to stay (they only took part in discussions about parties, the canteen and LTA);
- parents were often "put in their place" ("If you were really concerned about the school, you'd bring a couple of clowns to entertain at the Christmas party. That's what parents' associations are for, not just to complain about the teachers" (Francisca, ex-head).
- the topics discussed at teachers' and parents ' meetings (compulsory) were not, as related in numerous interviews, conducive to parental involvement. They generally centred around pupil assessment or, to put it in more "modern" terms, work the pupils had done.
- even at parties, parents and teachers did not socialize. The parents congregate at the far end of the gymnasium, watching their children perform at a distance. No one establishes any kind of contact with them; it is as if they weren't there (Christmas party, field note, 1999).

When more rebellious parents appeared and tried to challenge the teacher's authority by demanding to speak to the head, they were summarily dismissed:

> Sometimes parents come and say, "I wanted to speak to you because there's a problem with my son's teacher." And I say, "I'm sorry, but you'll have to sort that out with the teacher

> ecause she's the one responsible for the pupils (Paulo, headteacher, Park School).

Parents who tried to "ape" the behaviour of the middle class were likewise quickly made aware of their impotence. This was well illustrated by one incident during the course of the study. The parents' association tried to set up an LTA along middle-class lines (English, music and drama classes). Only eleven parents were interested and of these only six made formal enrolments. The "new" LTA closed down after Christmas for lack of support. The old one, which was much cheaper, continued to operate despite having no extra-curricular activities to offer.

These failures demonstrate that the spirit of initiative so widely preached in neo-liberal theories is rarely strong enough to circumvent the social structure: in this case the parents' initiative in attempting to secure for their children a variety of extra-curricular activities, was completely defeated by the "lack" of cultural and economic capital among the parents.

Citizens and Consumers

The democratic management of schools, in its post-revolutionary phase, has been accused of corporatism. It is alleged that, through an alliance between the State and the professionals, members of the community were effectively barred from involvement in Portuguese schools. This scenario was far from being absolute: it may be applicable to Park school, but would hardly explain the dynamic relations of Main school. Indeed, here the situation was almost diametrically opposed. Teachers' complaints were unanimous and practically endless:

> This is considered a model school, in Lisbon terms. But teachers don't want to come here, for obvious reasons: they don't want problems with the parents (Maria, associate teacher, Main School).

> Here it's the parents who have the upper hand. This is one of the schools with a reputation for very dangerous parents (Adriana, associate teacher, Main school).
>
> The teachers here get into a panic, because the parents ask too much of us in the conditions we have (Clemente, senior teacher, Main School).

These grievances are far from corresponding to any syndrome to do with the persecution of teachers. In Main School the influence of the "community" is recognized by the parents themselves, the authorities and the directors of the school:

> I have to admit that the parents' association of this school sticks its nose into everything. The parents are capable of pulling all sorts of strings, with the *CAE*, the *DREL* and the *DEB* [administrative levels], even with the Press (Ana, parents' association).
>
> Sometimes things reach us from the Ministry as *faits accomplis.* Just talk to the Regional Office - they could tell you a lot of stories like that (Carolina, *Drel).*
>
> The minister's nephew is a pupil of ours. In fact this community has everything, from ministers to secretaries of state (Rita, headteacher, Main school).
>
> At the beginning of last year, we didn't have teachers for two of the classes. So the parents went straight to the *DREL,* who of course were one the phone immediately: "Haven't you got any deputy heads there? Let them take the classes (Armanda, deputy head).
>
> I know the teachers criticize me [for listening to the parents]. But I'd rather get on with the parents than have to explain myself to Ana Benavente [Secretary of State]. I know that if things aren't solved here in the school, they'll be solved from above (Rita, head of Main School).

The parents took up all kinds of issues with the teachers and the management. Their demands began over the actual choice of school for their children:

> The parents invariably come and visit the school before enrolling their children. They want to know what it's like and

how it works: if the teachers are on the permanent staff, if they give the children continuous support, how the classes are organised. They always want to know everything about the school, including details of breaks, school dinners, etc. Today there was a woman here asking a thousand and one questions. She was very concerned to know who was going to be her child's teacher, and whether all the children who come here come from our kindergarten: "As my daughter didn't go to a kindergarten but to a private school, is there going to be a difference?" I said, "We take a lot of children who did their pre-schooling in other places, and there is absolutely no discrimination. All the children are treated equally." The woman had endless questions. She also wanted to know about the LTA - how it worked, until what time, what activities it offered, and, even inside class time, what sort of activities there were besides mathematics, Portuguese and other curricular subjects. She was a bit disappointed when I said, "Probably next year we'll have a music project, which would be very interesting." She also asked if the school offered English. I said yes, and that computers were also an extra, after half-past six." (...) Then she asked about the size of classes, if they were very big. She was very worried about whether her child would get sufficient individual attention, because she had been over-protected in her private school. I said that both our teachers and our non-teaching staff are excellent; even the children who don't have lunch in the canteen are supervised by ancillaries during the lunch-hour.

M - And was she satisfied or did she want to know anything else?

A - She wanted to see the premises and a classroom. I said the classrooms really weren't worth seeing because they were being refurbished, but she insisted and in the end we went. After seeing a classroom, she said, "Oh, that's all right - it looks like a classroom."

M - Are these sort of concerns common in this area, or was this mother an exception?

A - Very common. People come and want to know absolutely everything. They even arrange meetings and interviews to ask these kinds of question, so it didn't surprise me at all. Sometimes there's Rita (the head teacher) talking to parents on one side, me on the other and Natália (an "assistant") too. There just aren't enough of us to deal with all the requests. *Here the parents want to know the ins and outs of everything (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).*

This attitude of the critical consumer, who shops around before buying, shows that nowadays middle-class parents set about their choice of state school in much the same way as they would choose a private school. In fact many of them have, or had, their children in this sub-system. Moreover, in certain circles in Portugal, enrolling a child in the school of one's choice is the easiest thing in the world. There is always a parent, grandparent or godparent who works or resides in the area. Furthermore, the law recognizes that the guardian may not be either of the parents: the former need only be nominated by the latter. For their part the schools, appear to have no objection to receiving these privileged customers. This is why they do not question either addresses or changes of guardian.

The importance given to school choice represents, however, only a part of a deeper change in parenthood. The interview extract included above is particularly illustrative of the present-day tendency to construct an extremely elaborate concept of maternity and paternity:

> Parental responsibilities multiply as parenting and family life become an "educational project", something that has to be worked at rather than simply lived, something which can always be improved (...). The imperative is to identify and meet a whole range of potential needs and desires on the part of developing children (Vincent, 2000, p23).

This explains why certain parents' demands and expectations of the school were virtually limitless. And this level of expectation has obvious repercussions in the pressures to which teachers and the children themselves were subjected. Indeed, even the pupils lived a life of perpetual stress: besides the many activities open to them through the LTA run by the parents' association - swimming, music, judo, dance, drama - they also had activities in the evenings - piano, fencing, violin...

We are therefore in the presence of "an increased commodification of childhood, as consumer goods and services for children diversify and proliferate" (Vincent, 2000 p23).Teachers try to prevail upon parents, but with little success:

> I always say to them, 'Don't enrol your children in so many activities. Let them play a bit; they spend long enough at school as it is. But they want them to be little graduates in primary school (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

The existence of an LTA with a wide variety of activities thus constitutes one of the main reasons for choosing the school:

> The parents want lots of activities. For them this school is like a private school. And better than a private school, because it's a state school with almost the same number of activities on offer (Rita, Main School).

It is the parents who run the LTA and the canteen, and who maintain contacts with the Language Institute. They are therefore in charge of the whole process of (belated) modernization of Portuguese primary education. They also deal, through outside contracts, with many of the social services of the school: lunches, supervision of the children and indirect social support (for example study visits). In a word, they in effect take upon themselves many of the duties incumbent on the State in the field of basic education. This community service undertaken by the parents has some quite obviously adverse consequences:

- it reduces pressure on the State to modernise curricula and create new infrastructures in primary education (pressure which middle-class parents could otherwise exert). Indeed, this level of education continues to concern itself only with providing an educational service, rather as happened during the dictatorship, when social matters were relegated to charitable institutions. A meal in a primary school canteen now costs far more than at any other educational level. The responsibilities undertaken by middle-class parents in dealing with their children's problems make it easy for the State to renounce the social obligations which it should assume at this critical level of education to ensure equality of educational opportunity;
- it puts school equipment, head teachers and even ancillary staff at the service of interests which are clearly private and have nothing to do with many of the pupils.

> The co-ordination of the various outside services creates an awful lot of work, and causes a lot of complaints. And probably

> the staff lack the necessary commitment and sense of responsibility. When I ask someone to take responsibility for something, they pass the buck to someone else. And then the teachers come and complain that the room hasn't been cleaned, the board hasn't been cleaned, the cupboard has been opened and something or other removed. And if we take the matter up with those responsible, they say, "I'll do something about it, I'll give instructions, I'll take steps", but things improve for a day or so and then we're back to square one (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).
>
> With so many people coming to the school, we spend the whole day running around [opening and closing the gate]. And then the problem is that there are children here from half-past seven in the morning until the time we leave. As you can see, today we're on holiday, but there are children here. We never get any peace (Isaura, staff representative, Main School).

It is true that the school gets a certain spin-off from these activities: some of the poorer children are allowed free meals and to attend certain courses. But only a few benefit from these grants. On the other hand, the activities held at the school only cost parents about half the going rate (for example, the price of English classes). However, the most negative impact of this process is of an ideological nature. By taking responsibility off the shoulders of the State and putting it into the hands of local agents, it gives credence to the idea that all the problems of the education system could be resolved if there were the proper local initiatives. This image is extremely simplistic and, despite its apparent modernity, thoroughly conservative. Indeed, as was shown by the attempt to set up the "Brinca" LTA at Park school, certain proposals only succeed in schools with a sufficient ratio of middle-class parents who can afford to pay. Although such LTA's are offered at less than the market rate, they still cost at least 15.000$00 per child. If a family has two children, it will pay half the national minimum wage for them to join. This is absolutely inadmissible, considering the cost of housing and staple commodities in Portugal, in that it can only benefit a small minority of Portuguese families. It also creates two classes of basic education within the state system, depending on whether the schools offer extra-curricular activities or not. It should however be stressed

that the importance attached by parents to LTA's does not constitute their major concern, which lies rather, as certain authors have pointed out (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995), in the academic field:

> The parents want everything. They want community relations, they want projects, they want extra activities, they want music and everything. *But they're specially concerned with the [academic] teaching* (...) Provided the teacher, even if he isn't involved in big projects or other "showy" things, more or less follows the old-style Portuguese education system, the parents are delighted. What they want is for their children to *work, work, work* (Armanda, deputy head, Main School, my emphasis).

On the other hand, almost all the teachers who favoured methods considered innovative, found they had problems with parents. These problems could drag on for years, even when the teachers concerned had an excellent reputation in the professional and academic community (for example, teachers collaborating with teacher training colleges or on ministry projects):

> When I came here, I had lots of problems with the parents. I had a different approach to teaching, and was always averse to textbooks. I began in the way I was used to, and the parents were up in arms. I had to have endless meetings with them - we once spent a whole Saturday in the school, just discussing my way of working with the children (Maria, associate teacher, Main School).

Three years later, the parents were still "provoking" her and pressuring her to go more quickly and be more academically demanding. For example, at a meeting held *in October*, at which Maria explained that she had been revising basic material from the previous year, one mother immediately retorted with some hostility, "So that's what the third year is going to be - revision of the second?" (Fieldnote, October 2000).

Other teachers had similar experiences:

> When I took over the class, I could immediately sense the parents' anxiety to know how I was going to teach such-and-such an item, and what were my aims. I explained that, as far as my method was concerned, I very much favoured working as a group and that in general I would go from the pupils to the material rather than vice-versa. It was very difficult; they weren't used to this and questioned everything I did. One day a

> mother came to me and said, "Can't they do subtraction yet?" And I said, "But you know there's more on the syllabus than subtraction." And I don't think they're mature enough to learn to subtract by borrowing. But I didn't give up, and was always trying to explain my method at parents' meetings. I give them the term plan, which includes drama and art, so that they can see and follow everything. If I'd given in, my classes would be totally perceptive.
> M - Was there a lot of pressure?
> S - A huge amount. And the teacher must always have the courage of her convictions. I know the school, and insecurity is fatal. For example, the first year I was here there was a teacher who was constantly being accosted by parents. And this year there was another who had to leave. Her insecurity showed, and the parents took such advantage of this that she had to leave. She tried to talk them round, but they didn't want to know. That's why I say insecurity is fatal. (Sara, Main School)

When pressure on teachers is not enough, parents resort to the school management:

> The parents here are always complaining. They complain because one teacher misses classes, because another's always late, because another is not sticking to the syllabus, because their child's teacher is going slower than the other teachers ... The parents get together and compare [the teachers](...) and they want to see and to know everything: the syllabuses, the teaching-plans. And even when they don't speak to the teachers, they come and have a go at us. They even want the teachers to teach things that aren't on the syllabus. And we try to calm them down (Adélia, deputy head, Main School).

It was therefore easy to see why the management of the school made a point of being in the school in the morning when the parents came to leave their children. This was the time when some of the problems could be circumvented. Rita (head of Main school) was always surrounded, first thing in the morning, by a group of mothers that would take about an hour to break up. This mediation on Rita's part often prevented problems from getting out of hand. Even so, there was a general feeling in this school that "parents had too much say". It was obvious, moreover, that Rita was held in great esteem by the community in which she worked. The parents' association also admitted that it was easier to solve problems with Rita than with most of the teachers:

> Sometimes there are things we arrange with Rita for which she is then unable to get the approval of the other teachers (Jorge, member of parents' association).

The current research shows, therefore, that while social class determines relations between the school and the family, the head teacher also plays an important role as mediator (see also Power *et al*, 1997). This will, however, be explored in greater depth in the phase two of the study.

The analysis conducted throughout this chapter, concerning the issues of leadership and participation, has led us to identify the convergence in Portuguese primary schools of three main managerial trends: educational centralization, pressures for self-management and a "toned down" form of neo-managerialism.

Centralization meant essentially that the curricular, pedagogic and financial aspects of school activity were highly regulated. This mass production of rules and regulations did not, however, result in as rigid a control over practices as one might be led to expect. In fact, the apathy of teachers towards administrative issues was one of the reasons for their scanty awareness of the prevailing norms and legislation. Accordingly, non-observation of the rules was common, and even applied to major aspects of the pedagogic and curricular management of the schools. Many of the legislative infringements recorded in this field were related to non-assimilation of the new model for pupil evaluation (designed to adapt the curriculum and strategies to the needs of the pupils, thus cutting down the school failure rate) and to the prevalence of traditional styles of professional socialization (which led teachers to favour textbooks and worksheets at the expense of contents and programmatic guidelines).

In the organisational sphere, "resistance" to directives from the central administration was mainly in the form of paying only lip-service to the legislation. Open violation of the law was, meanwhile, avoided. Plans and projects were therefore drawn up but only superficially executed. This way of

circumventing government directives was facilitated by the fact that there was no efficient control mechanism to back up the normative hyperactivity of the administration. The sheer unwieldiness of the system, plus the anti-authoritarianism in the schools combined, in fact, to create an atmosphere which was hardly conducive to external control (exams, inspection, assessment of teacher performance).

Portuguese teachers thus enjoyed, in spite of formal centralization, a not inconsiderable degree of autonomy. This autonomy, which was produced by a marked segmentation of educational activity, included major aspects related to curriculum, assessment and pedagogy (see also Chapter 3).

It should be stressed that the freedom enjoyed by the teachers was not only brought about by the weakened political influence of the central administration associated with the end of the dictatorship. It also reflected a perpetuation of certain self-management orientations resulting from the April Revolution: emphasis on the teachers as a group (political and symbolic); narrowing of the gap between directors and directed; restriction of the organisational participation of non-professional educators (parents, members of the community). However, during the period under analysis, in contrast to the revolutionary period, the observed trends towards self-management were more of an individual than a collective cast. They centred almost exclusively on a mechanical defence of professional autonomy and appeared to entertain no ideas of emancipation or social transformation. This is why the second phase of the democratic management of schools, subsequent to the revolutionary experiment, has been classified as corporate (Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994).

The tension between the centralist pressure of the central administration and the autonomous orientation of the teachers was eased by a certain tacit convergence of interests regarding the "outlawing" of some educational actors: parents, local authorities, (see also Lima, 1992; Afonso, 1994, Barroso, 1999). This "alliance" between the central administration and the teachers, closely bound up with the nature and degree of the country's economic development, helped to slow down the penetration of new managerial concepts of a neo-

liberal and neo-managerial stamp. Thus directors of Portuguese schools, unlike their counterparts in other countries, had a very fragile status among their colleagues.

The influence of the majority of "consumers" was also very limited and, moreover, circumscribed by rigid patterns of social stratification. With the exception of the upper middle class, parents had virtually no say in the running of the schools: they were in evidence mainly at compulsory meetings, which frequently consisted of no more than the *individual* notification of pupils' results. Even social events were not always open to families (Christmas parties, end-of-year ceremonies).

In upper middle class schools the situation was practically reversed. Here the parents wielded a degree of pressure very similar to that observed in contexts where the power of the consumer was the bedrock of educational restructuring. Thus, upper middle class families acted as skilled choosers in their children's education, using various tactics to turn to advantage the respective legislation, including resorting, when necessary, to the giving of false addresses.

The intense interference of these "clients" was not limited to the choice of school. After securing a place in the school of their choice, they would continue to follow their child's progress with great interest. In spite of limited legal backing, they were fully prepared to question the priorities and methods of the teachers. Nor were they put off by obstacles of an administrative nature. They attempted to bend the rules, often with remarkable success: transfer of pupils to other classes, speedy replacement of teachers who were absent, "control" of teachers' work. Although parents showed interest in a number of different issues, they were particularly concerned with the academic component of the curriculum. It was in this area, similar to tendencies noted in other countries (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995), that parental pressure was most heavily brought to bear. Parents were not blind, however, to the multifaceted needs of the "new economy": information technology, languages, arts, personal image Accordingly, upper middle class schools offered, at the instigation of parent associations, a wide variety of extra-curricular activities (music, dance, English,

computers, judo). Such local initiatives were, moreover, strongly encouraged by the State: the social and cultural functions of the school, "modernization" of the system, support systems (cafeteria, bar, security) were in fact areas in which private initiative and patronage were not only permitted but actively encouraged.

Centralising and autonomous orientations were therefore not the only ones to be identified in Portuguese primary schools. There was also evidence of the new neo-liberal and neo-managerial concepts, in various aspects of school activity: cultural, organisational and social.

On the cultural level, as has already been mentioned, there was some assimilation of the ideals of the new professionalism (see also Chapter 3). This assimilation was most noticeable among teachers with responsibilities for coordination and school management and, in practical terms, in middle-class schools (projects, educational partnerships, "customer" service).

In the organisational sphere, particular stress should be given to the redefinition of the director's role, which came to include greater diversification and political importance. This redefinition was the result of the convergence, beginning in the late eighties, of a number of factors:

- the delegation, by the central administration, of fresh managerial responsibilities to primary schools (project design, plan of activities, regulations);
- the creation of logistic, recreational and cultural support infra-structures in certain schools.

On the social level, reference should be made to the increasing pressure and influence of middle-class families (already mentioned). This pressure has further helped to increase the social and political responsibilities of the school director (receiving parents and mediating conflicts). Middle-class schools have also become an important advertising and commercial target for various companies, which obliges school directors to interact frequently with these new partners.

It can therefore be stated that, during the period under analysis, there was already considerable differentiation between Portuguese state schools. Middle-class schools had a "modern" nucleus of education at their disposal, consisting of certain curricular activities (projects, the support of specialist teachers) and a comprehensive extra-curricular programme (languages, arts, sports). Besides this, they enjoyed better logistic and social infrastructures (canteen, supervision of pupils outside class-time, security).

Schools with mainly under-privileged pupils, and which did not have the support of parent associations or local patrons, could only in exceptional cases diversify their educational offer and provide additional school services such as canteens, supervision and leisure-time activities. They therefore attracted an ever smaller and more socially deprived population.

This study therefore confirms fears that appeals by schools and communities to "free initiative" may lead to (increased) social inequality. It also shows that the cultural and social capital of certain families enables them to circumvent even the administrative, institutional and professional barriers inherent in a strongly centralized educational system. The "deregulation" of the system, as we shall see in Part III of this dissertation, will facilitate the process of "privatization" of Portuguese primary schools attended by middle and upper class pupils. However, as has just been shown, various aspects of this process were already in evidence in the final years of the democratic management of schools (especially "choice" and a certain curricular differentiation).

PART III

SCHOOL AUTONOMY: THE EARLY YEARS

CHAPTER FIVE
NEW PATTERNS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The institutionalisation of SBM models presupposes a thorough reform in the regulating of schools and in the nature of the relations between the various local actors (Clark & Newman, 1997; Menter *et al*, 1997; Raab & Arnot, 2000; Troman, 2000; Gewirtz *et al*, 2002). This chapter will therefore be dedicated entirely to an analysis of these transformations and I shall begin by referring to certain aspects regarding the change in patterns of educational regulation in contemporary societies (Section 1). I shall then summarize the principal changes in this field in Portuguese primary education as a result of the implementation of SBM. Particular emphasis will be given to the new role of the central administration (Section 2), of school managers (Sections 3 & 4) and of the community in school management (Section 5).
Finally, by way of a conclusion, I shall give a detailed description of the new network of relations of power and influence underpinning the day-to-day running of Portuguese primary schools.

SBM: a Shift From State Control to the Governance of Education?

The political significance of the reform in school governance has given rise to different interpretations related to the issue of concentration and dispersal of power in contemporary societies. SBM advocates emphasise the world-wide retreat from centralised, bureaucratised educational systems and celebrate the possibilities of choice, empowerment and diversity that they regard as part of the process (Chubb & Moe, 1992; Tooley, 1996; Caldwell & Spinks, 1998). However, several authors, standing outside the idealization of the new structures, prefer to speak of the changing modes of regulation of public education (Menter *et al*, 1997; Ball, 2001/2002; Apple *et al*, 2002; Lima, 2002). It is

these latter perspectives which, since the principles of SBM have already been described, will constitute the main focus of the present reflection.

New Models of Educational Regulation

The idea that the institutionalisation of SBM cannot be regarded exclusively as a process of educational decentralisation derives, in the first place, from the way the model has been conceptualised, i.e. the idea that the central administration should retain its monopoly over the definition and evaluation of the basic objectives of the system (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992,1998).

To argue that the implementation of SBM models cannot be understood simply as a process of educational decentralisation clearly does not imply that the State continues to regulate education along traditional lines. Indeed, several authors have pointed to the transition from a model of direct regulation on the part of the State to another, based on different types of association between government, para-government and non-government organisations (Sarmento *et al* 1999; Arnott & Raab, 2000). It would be misguided, however, to assume that this change necessarily leads to a process of political democratisation.

This problem had in fact already been highlighted by Gramsci, in his studies of the nature of the State in western societies (Gramsci, 1971). Indeed, this author was one of the first to consider that the "state" could not be understood without reference to civil society (i.e. to those "private" organisations which belong neither to the production sphere nor to the administrative, political and legal structures through which "state" control is exercised). Civil society, in Gramsci's view, would play a vital role in the dissemination of concepts and practices congruent with the strategic interests of the dominant social groups. Although various notions of civil society had previously been put forward, the Gramscian perspective is still of help in clarifying why:

- SBM has been accused of further disadvantaging those already disadvantaged (Derouet, 2000; Whitty, 2002).

- the opening-up of schools to civil society has been characterized by an increasing formalization and contracting of relations between social partners (Stoer & Rodrigues, 1998).

The contract (which in Portugal takes the form of the "protocol") defines the duties, aims and responsibilities of each of the institutional "partners" and, increasingly, procedures for evaluating results (which is precisely what happens with the contracting of autonomy in Portuguese schools). Although the delegating of responsibilities (or the contracted service) may be of little importance, the introduction of the contract in itself paves the way for change in social relations by reinforcing entrepreneurial identity and the principle of performativity. The signing of contracts in areas outside traditional economic activity - education, politics, culture - also represents a significant enlargement of the territory economic theory (Smyth, 1999; Kenway *et al*, 2000). It constitutes, in this sense, more a sign of expansion in the economic sphere than of development in the domain of citizenship.

Indeed the new managerial perspectives do not limit themselves to valorizing "civil society" and citizenship. They also modify the meaning traditionally attached to these concepts.

> As the new education policies foster the idea that responsibility, beyond the minimum required for public safety, is to be defined entirely as a matter for individuals and families, then not only is the scope of the state narrowed, but civil society will progressively be defined solely in market terms. As education appears to be devolved from the state to an increasingly marketised civil society, consumer rights will prevail over citizen rights. This will reduce the opportunities for democratic debate and collective action (Whitty, 2002, p87).

Internalising Neo-Managerialism

Changes in the way education is regulated in contemporary societies are not, however, limited to the redefinition of boundaries between the central administration and "civil society". School organisations will also be the object of thoroughgoing internal institutional redefinition. Power (1997) clearly expresses

this idea when she says that at the heart of reformist programmes "there is a commitment to push control further into organisational structures, inscribing it within systems which can then be audited. In this respect *governance*[1] is not to do with policing or surveillance in the normal sense of external observation, although elements of this may exist; "it has more to do with attempts to re-order the collective and individual selves that make up organisational lives (Power *et al*, 1997, p42, my emphasis).

This movement implies an important change in the way individuals themselves are defined. Social actors are no longer considered to be the repository of a particular set of competences, skills and knowledge, and come to be essentially characterized by their pragmatic capabilities and dispositions (Popkewitz, 1999). In this sense they become "empty selves", endowed with a merely temporary and contingent subjectivity that is liable to be redefined and restructured with each new contract. It is in this context that we can understand the overriding importance attributed by SBM supporters to the cultural leadership of organisations. Institutional cultures and visions articulated by 'leaders' provide the substance of commitment, purpose and group allegiance. School actors need to be encouraged to organise and plan their whole lives in accordance with the rules of economic calculation and "enterprise culture", focused on the survival of the organisation.

The institutionalisation of forms of "enterprise government" has important consequences on the social level. In the first place, it gives ontological priority to a particular category of person: the business person or entrepreneur (Peters & Waterman, 1995; Dunford *et al*, 2000). At the same time certain social functions - administration, consumption, evaluation - are emphasised, while traditional functions are subject to modification and capture (especially production).

> First, there is a clear division or gap developing between school managers, oriented primarily to matters of financial planning,

[1] "Governance - that is, the control of an activity by some means such that a range of desired outcomes is attained - is, however, not just the province of the state. Rather, it is a function that can be performed by a wide variety of public and private, state and non-state, national and international, institutions and practices" (Hirst and Thompson, 1995, p422, quoted in Dale, 1997, p275).

> income generation and marketing, and classroom practitioners (...) Within this gap, this division of purposes and interest, there is considerable potential for tension and conflict, particularly in direct confrontation between financial planning and educational judgement about good practice (...) In these situations the "steering at a distance" aspects of the reform and the role of management in the delivery of performativity are clear within the microphysics of the institution. The manager, in effect, stands for and does the work of the state in imposing financial limits and disciplines on the practice of colleagues (Ball, 1994, pp73-75).

Executives, legitimised by "transformational leadership", constitute the prototype of the "new man" generated by the entrepreneurial culture (see Chapter 4). However, "entrepreneurial governance" is not restricted to a specific social category. Some studies reveal the emergence of a new professional who shows considerable sympathy with and consummate skill in the face of the new labour conditions with which they find themselves confronted (Pollard *et al*, 1994; Woods & Jeffrey *et al*, 1997).

It should, however, be stressed that "freedom to manage" would seem to be far more limited than neo-managerial concepts would have us believe. In the first place, the new managerial concepts are being implemented in a context of steady expansion of the "audit state". In this sense, the increased load of documentation required by SBM does not serve only to control the teaching staff: even school executives are "examined" and subjected to "hierarchical observation". In Portugal, for example, the transition to "autonomy" was accompanied by an annual school inspection focusing on administrative aspects (together with an increase in mechanisms for assessing school results). The margin of autonomy enjoyed by school managers is further affected by the profusion of models of "professional parenting", which directly or indirectly influence the running of the schools (see Chapters 4 & 6).

Secondly, despite being the key actors in their schools, school managers are in fact at the middle management of bureaucracy: they are neither liberal professionals nor part of the "technostructure" that defines the objectives and methods of "surveillance" of the educational process. Of particular relevance in

his situation are the warnings of those authors who remind us of the limits of neo-managerialism and "transformational leadership" for the new school executives: "school principals are being produced as on-line managers providing efficiency, accountability and compliance, but their hands are tied in their endeavour (Meadmore *et al*, 1995, p409; see also Power *et al*, 1997).

Finally, it should be noted that the new educational policies rarely imply an immediate and radical break with the old forms of coordination and power (central administration, professional expertise, bureaucratic organisation). Further, there are differences of temporality, configuration and intensity in the way in which they penetrate the various contexts and organisations. This is why various authors refer to the non-linear nature of the processes of convergence seen in the domain of school administration (Green, 1999; Derouet, 2002) and the existence of a dialectic of continuity and change in current educational reforms (Afonso, 1999; Whitty, 2002; Dias, 2002). This dialectic is reinforced by the *"conservative modernisation"* that prevails in the definition of policies (Dale, 1990). These perspectives, as we shall now see, are particularly helpful in illuminating the way in which the new management model was implemented in Portugal (see also Chapter 6).

Organisational Redefinition, Pragmatism and Political Re-Centralization.

Educational reforms carried out in Portugal, even during the period prior to the implementation of democracy, generally complied with the assumptions of an "educating state" that is also an "enlightened reformer" (CAA, 1997). This orientation was only relaxed after the LBSE (1986), with the introduction of forms of public debate of documents and the sanctioning of the national education council (which includes representatives of virtually all sectors of "civil society"). However, "enlightened" strategies for change continued to dominate. It is therefore not surprising that the actual sanctioning of school

autonomy should have been a government initiative (Afonso, 1999), and that the central administration should have played a major role in the management of change: scheduling of the process and definition of criteria for the immediate putting into effect of change (educational level, size of schools); drafting of models for the production of norms (regulations, project guidelines, etc.); regulation of working conditions for those in positions of responsibility (salary increments, release from teaching duties).

Schools, despite being elevated to the category of "centres for the defining of educational policies" continued to be relegated to the subordinate position of those who execute directives rather than define policies. Furthermore, they were obliged to carry out a significant organisational restructuring to an extremely tight deadline[2]: organisation of school consortia, constitution of provisional commissions and election of new management bodies, drafting of the documents required by law, training for the new school functions. This reforming frenzy turned the transitional phase into a period of marked re-centralization: it curbed the freedom enjoyed by local actors in their internal relations and it gave rise to a heavy demand for institutional support from the central services [3].

In the hurly-burly of change, teachers (and even directors) were left unaware of central aspects of the new system of administration. The issue of autonomy contracts, in particular, largely went by the board:

> Interviewer: And what about the autonomy contracts?
> Graça: The autonomy contracts? What autonomy contracts?
> Interviewer: You've never heard of them?
> Graça: Not that I recall. But what contracts? The only contract we've made is for swimming in the Areeiro swimming-pool. (Graça, president, executive Board, Gama School)

> Interviewer: You mean that the autonomy process is complete?
> Adriana: Well, isn't it?

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[2] within the space of approximately one year

[3] Certain more innovative ventures, like the Raag-Forum (an Internet debating site) ended up being taken over by the re-centralizing camp, who used it as a way to spread the official word on the new management regime, and even as a vehicle for ideas and orientations not even alluded to in the models (global report, p33).

> Interviewer: I'm just the interviewer, so my opinion doesn't count! (laughter). But what do you feel?
> Adriana: It seems to me that everything's been done. The office is up and running, and we've got a board of directors, a School Assembly and a Board of Studies. I don't think there's anything left to do - nothing at all. But for you to be asking me, it's probably because there is! (Adriana, associate teacher, Main school).

I suggest then, that the early years of SBM (1998-2002) correspond, in a variety of domains, to a clear re-centralization of the system resulting from the combination of three essential factors: the tight deadlines of the transitional phase; the hyper-regulating tendency which was a feature of the process (this regulating pressure affected even minor organisational aspects like the allocation of time available for administrative duties); and the "overlooking" (postponement) of autonomy contracts, a key channel through which the new responsibilities would be transferred to the schools. In this sense, the implementation of SBM seems to have done more to increase the "rationality" of the prevailing bureaucratic model in Portugal than to disseminate alternative models. Indeed, Portuguese bureaucracy has been considered a partial bureaucracy, "that is, an organisational model which would strengthen centralized bureaucratic control and tend to discount other dimensions more related with rationalization" (Lima, 1998, p157). This is evident in the twin-faceted operation of Portuguese schools, simultaneously characterised by the bureaucratic order of connection and the anarchic order of disconnection (Lima, 1998). The institutionalisation of SBM, by imposing a more detailed specification of the organisational dynamics of schools (rules and regulations, projects and plans of activities) together with a strengthening and diversification of control structures (evaluation of results, annual inspections of schools operating autonomously) promotes greater rationality and predictability of the system.

The success of the implementation of the new management model, as can be seen from the number of consortia set up or from the sanctioning of new management bodies, has thus been considered more administrative than

political (see also Barroso, 2001). Even in areas where school autonomy was apparent, compliance with national directives prevailed. In fact, "school projects" and "school regulations" ended up reiterating national directives in a variety of ways: institutional objectives were withdrawn from the Basic Law of Education, curricular aims from the national programmes, school rules from official documents[4]. Even the actual diagnostic analysis of the schools, which should be central to the affirmation of their institutional specificity, reproduces[5] the key elements of the prevailing management discourse: importance of team work (Main School) and students' basic and social skills [6] (social skills were the project focus of Pessoa and Magalhães Schools, as they had also been, in the previous phase, of Main School). In effect, the thematic similarity between the projects of the different schools under analysis shows that the implementation of SBM is failing to produce real initiative and local policy-making.

These considerations should not, however, lead us to the conclusion that the implementation of the new management regime has generated nothing but processes of re-centralization. Approximation to neo-managerial paradigms were evident in a different aspects: changes in the type of relations between the central office and the schools; the gradual institutionalisation of the mechanics of "steering at a distance"; incentives for the "re-culturation" and reorganisation of schools; new power relations in primary education. Indeed, observation of the process of reform in the four schools comprising the sample reveals that, despite regulating pressure, there has been a degree of change in the attitude of the administration towards the schools. This change was evident in the discharge of new duties - counselling, legal consultancy, incentives to action, training, a certain receptiveness in the constitution of groupings - which all add up to the outline of a model closer to forms of incentive, guidance and consultancy than to the purely bureaucratic model. This transformation is not

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[4] memo, field notes, Main school, 1999 & 2000 and Pessoa School 2000

[5] With the exception of Gama School, which was, curiously, the least in favour of the autonomy process

[6] The curricular reorganization of 2000/2001 in fact made this issue obligatory, which is why the schools under analysis simply brought this measure forward by a year (it was already being hotly debated at the level of official structures)

solely limited to the schools under analysis, since the evaluation commission also stresses that "most of those interviewed are conscious of a supportive and flexible attitude" on the part of the de-centralized central administration (Barroso, 2001, Report 5, p6). And indeed, the change in attitude on the part of the administration must be considered highly significant. Indeed, the traditional orientation of hierarchical control and norm production, which persisted in spite of the "glasnost" since the 1986 educational reform, has been considered one of the major obstacles to a public policy of devolution of power in Portugal (Afonso, 1999).

The "conservative modernization" of Portuguese educational administration can also be seen in the increasingly frequent use of mechanisms related to "steering at a distance": internal and external evaluation, indirect managerial instruments (projects, plans of activities); institutionalisation of a variety of forms of contrived collegiality (school management, curricular management, pedagogic management).

Of particular relevance here is the development of a variety of mechanisms for the evaluation of performance; the evaluation of the quality of schools, and the periodic preparation of internal assessment reports. This is important, firstly because it confirms the trend towards the "audit state" already in place in other countries (see Chapter 1), and secondly, because the abolition of external evaluation was one of the few "April victories" which survived the educational and political normalisation that came in the wake of the Revolution. This abolition represented an extremely important part of the autonomy won by Portuguese teachers in the final quarter of the twentieth century; and, paradoxically, the increase in "school autonomy" in the most recent reforms has led to a reduction in "teacher autonomy".

Finally, as discussed above, the (soft) change in attitude of the Portuguese administration towards the schools was accompanied by an increase in mechanisms of internal control. The role of school executives and that of middle-class parents has, as we shall now see, played a vital role in this process.

New "Headship": the Difficulties of Changing the Paradigm

The power to be granted to school executives is one of the distinctive features of neo-managerial institutional reform (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Clark & Newman, 1992; Arnott & Raab, 2000). In Portugal, in contrast, the democratic experience combined with the centralist tradition had turned school heads into "teachers among teachers". However, in the nineties, there was a distinct trend towards increasing divergence in values, status and duties between teachers and school managers (see Chapter 4). Indeed, the latter seemed able to accommodate themselves to successive mandates, most recently, by turning themselves into a breed of professional managers. This phenomenon is readily apparent in the process of the institutionalisation of SBM:

> With regard to the members of the executive council, one can detect a definite thread of continuity in relation to the management bodies in office before the beginning of the implementation of the new system of administration and management. Thus, in about two-thirds of the cases examined, the president of the executive steering committee had previously carried out management duties at a similar level (Barroso, 2001, Report n° 4, p2).

The support given by a very considerable number of "school managers" to the new management model was not limited to their avowed readiness to continue in their position. In the schools under analysis, for example, the influence of former heads was decisive in generating a prompt acceptance of the transition to the new management model:

> In April I was at a meeting with the regional director, and he said they were ready to go ahead with the process in schools with over 300 pupils. I had to raise the issue at a teachers' meeting. *To begin with the teachers wanted nothing to do with it, because the school had been against the new model. But I made them see* that going against the Ministry wouldn't get us anywhere. We'd get a bad name and only succeed in delaying the process for a year (Rita, head teacher, Main school, my emphasis).

> *Here people were in favour of school autonomy more because they were carried along by the head than through personal conviction.* It was the head who espoused the new model, and the rest of us followed suit. In a set-up like ours, a persuasive, convincing

> head could talk a lot of people round. Especially on administrative matters, which were not of much interest to the teachers anyway. People would say, "OK, if that's the way you think, it's fine by me". That's what happened over the question of autonomy (Maria, permanent teacher, Sta. Maria Consortium Main school, my emphasis).

The collaboration of school directors with the central services, during the process of implementation of SBM, was further evident in the role they played in the drawing-up of lists of candidates for the new management structures. Faced with the apathy of their colleagues, who were reluctant to take on administrative duties, former heads and presidents of steering committees exerted a decisive influence on the formation of the new management bodies:

> I only agreed to be president of the school assembly because I was a friend of Rita's. I don't really like this type of work. As you may have noticed, I'm a bit shy. In group situations I often remain silent; I get a bit tongue-tied (Amália, president of the school assembly, Main school).

> I had to call a meeting to organise the lists. Nobody wanted to apply. I had to lose my temper with them (Rita, Main School).

The evaluation committee report reveals that this kind of "persuasion" took place nationwide: "Many of the panel members stated that they had agreed to be on the lists of candidates, without knowing what they were going to do, more because of external pressure or support of promoters and colleagues than because of personal conviction or interest" (Barroso, 2001, Report nº 7, p11).

The apathy of the new school representatives towards organisational issues, associated with ignorance regarding the duties and *modus operandi* of the various bodies, did a great deal to increase the sphere of influence of the school executives.

> People are always asking me who's responsible for this, that or the other. They're too used to leaving everything to me. They receive the information, but they don't read it, so at the end of the day they don't know what's going on (Rita, President of the Executive Board Main School).

This is why, for example, some Assembly members were clearly dominated by others:

> The agenda of the school assembly continues to be drafted almost completely by Rita (memo field notes, end of 2000).
>
> Rita still chaired the school assembly meeting, even though Amélia, the president of the assembly, was there. The excuse was that she had lost her voice, but the truth of the matter is that she was completely in the dark about the subjects under discussion, as well as the way the meeting was run. All she did, at the end, was to thank everyone for attending (field notes, Main school, July 2001).

The competitive advantages [7] enjoyed by a considerable proportion of the new executives and former heads over other organisational members should not, however, be taken to indicate a "smooth" and straightforward transition from "teacher among teachers" to "chief executive" (see also Chapters 1 & 4). The pragmatism displayed by teachers in accepting the formal transition to the new management model did not prevent them from reacting, on occasions quite violently, against changes introduced into their schools by the implementation of SBM. Among issues that stirred up major controversy were the disempowerment of the School Board, the curbing of classroom autonomy and the performance of new managerial duties by teachers.

Disempowerment of the School Board

Public debate of Decree-law 115-A/98 centred mainly on the issue of parent participation. This discussion overshadowed other important changes introduced by the new management model in primary teaching, such as the transition from a system of direct democracy (centred on the School Board) to a system of representative democracy (school assembly, executive board, pedagogic board). It was only when the process was already at an advanced stage that many teachers realised the practical and political implications of the change. At Main School, for example, the raising of awareness was the result of

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[7] Familiarity with the legislation; experience

the suggestion of the Executive Council, to move a pupil to another class (said pupil was Carolina, the daughter of one of the most active members of the parents' association), with no direct opposition from the Pedagogic Board (representatives of teachers, parents and ancillary staff), but with stiff opposition from the Teachers' Committee (the old "school board"). This triggered a row about the new organisational rules:

> Rita: The hardest part of the new management was trying to convince people that the School Board (or Teachers' Committee, as it came to be known) no longer had the same power. People were very used to voicing their opinions at staff meetings, and although we already had autonomy, people didn't realize that things had changed. If it hadn't been for the problem of Carolina's class-change this year, people would probably have gone on thinking the same until the end of the year.
> M: Can you elaborate on that? That point interests me a great deal.
> Rita: The others were up in arms about Carolina changing class. They wanted to stop her moving. They wanted to call a Teachers' Committee meeting to overthrow the decision. They thought the Teachers' Committee could overthrow the Board of Studies' decision: they couldn't believe that a Teachers' Committee representing 27 teachers could be helpless to reverse the decisions made by 12 (Pedagogic Board). So we had to convene a Teachers' Committee meeting to explain the situation. That's when I asked Lucília (Regional Education Office) to let me have the jurisdiction, so that people could understand the process. And although I was very diplomatic, and didn't say so in as many words, I was able to show them that the Teachers' Committee amounted to nothing at all. I let it be understood that there are only four bodies running the school, and that the Teachers' Committee is merely a department, a curricular extension of the Board of Studies. And I believe that when people were confronted with this chart, which shows quite clearly which body is responsible for what, only then did they realize that the new model had made sweeping changes. And that's when you could see that people were starting to get worried. Up until then the groups hadn't really worked. People didn't get together. Nobody had taken this seriously. They thought that coordinators went to Pedagogic Board meetings, but that they would never decide anything without first consulting them. You see? Fátima - one of the main opponents of the new structures - was one of those who argued that the coordinators couldn't decide anything at

> the Board of Studies because they had to consult their colleagues first. She went as far as to make a phone-call and arrange for someone to come over from the Union, but I said, "Look, Fátima, I'm sorry to say this, but you're not talking to someone who's ignorant of the law. And you can phone whoever you like and get information from wherever you like, because I'm quite sure of my ground. I know the legislation and I know that there's nothing in the law that says that year-coordinators can't decide on behalf of their colleagues - it was they who elected them to be their representatives. Anyway, it was at that meeting that people finally understood how much things had changed. That was the meeting where Isabel Rebelo, who's a down-to-earth type, came out and said, "All right, so the bottom line is that we can't decide anything any more". I thought that was rather amusing and said, "Right, Isabel, the bottom line is that you can't decide anything any more. You can voice your opinion whenever you like, but you can't make decisions".

Although relieved of power, the Teachers' Committee (formerly the School Board) continued, throughout the period of observation, to be a focus of "political activism". In an attempt to prevent some of the "mudslinging", the president of the Executive Board of Gama School sent out an internal memo, on the advice of the DREL (Central Administration) to the effect that the Teachers' Committee would henceforth be convened only at the formal request of at least half the teachers. Even so, he was unable to halt its activity completely.

The New Organisational Context and the Loss of Teacher Autonomy

The importance given by teachers to the Teachers' Committee may seem strange given the limited functions it seemed to play during the *democratic management of schools* [8] and the fact that, at the beginning, teachers reacted more against parent participation in schools than against the new organisational structure. However, it must be borne in mind that the teachers' plenary had long been the main channel through which teachers defended their autonomy (individual) and asserted their power (internal):

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[8] see Chapter 4

> I think the idea is so deeply rooted in everybody's [teachers'] minds that they had some say in the way things were run. And the old model had been going for so many years, so many years . . . since '75, wasn't it? It's so deeply rooted that it's hard for people suddenly to change their mindset and think, "Now we have representatives. They're the ones who are going to decide, not me. It's very hard" (Dulce, deputy head, Pessoa School).

However, it was not only these historical considerations that justified the "closing of ranks" within the Teachers' Committee. It was therein that still lay the main collective power of the teachers.

> A: People like the Teachers' Committee; they like things to be decided there, like in the old school board meetings. Except that now it's a body without any deliberative power, because it's the Board of Studies that makes the decisions.
> M: But why do they prefer the Teachers' Committee?
> A: Because at Teachers' Committee meetings they're in a large group and, well, there's always strength in numbers, isn't there? And a large group has more clout than one representative per school year. On the Board of Studies there's one representative per year - hardly more than six in all - and they're responsible for the school projects. At the old staff meetings there were 27 people, all turning out in force with the same opinions, so they had real decision-making power (Armanda, deputy head, Main school).

The new school structure, on the contrary, now imposed restrictions on the role of internal policy-making played by teachers during the "democratic management" of schools. Not only were teachers dispersed among the various new bodies, which diminished their perception of the organisational workings of the whole (unlike the case of the President of the Executive Board), but also the particular features of the new organs inhibited and altered the involvement of many of the teachers:

> I also think, from what I can see, *that there are people on the Board of Studies who act differently when they're at Teachers' Committee meetings from how they act at Board of Studies meetings.* It's as if they were afraid of being exposed. What's more, they don't really know the community, so they seem inhibited by the presence of community-members at Board of Studies meetings. That's what I think (Rita, executive board, Main school, my emphasis).

Indeed, in the case of Main School, the changed demeanour of certain teachers almost certainly derived from the presence of *upper* middle-class parents at Board of Studies and School Assembly meetings. As far as I could see throughout the research, the presence of these parents curbed both the criticisms directed at parental behaviour and the declarations of unconditional self-denial on the part of the teachers (including by implication the "moral" superiority of the latter over the former). This was not just the result of the new coexistence. The parents' representatives, especially at Main School, adopted from the outset a highly critical stance towards what were described as teachers' verbal excesses:

> There's a very curious attitude on the part of the teaching staff, which can be seen, for example, at the school assembly. They look at the parents' association as if it should be held accountable for the attitude taken by each of the parents. We are accountable for the attitudes that we, as representatives of the parents, adopt and we try to dissuade the other parents from taking attitudes or getting involved in situations which, in an organised and institutional sense, we consider inappropriate. But there's no way we can be held responsible for a parent who has verbally attacked an education auxiliary, or a teacher, or a leisure-time supervisor. This is the message we have been putting across at the school assembly (Jorge, parent representative and leader of the parent association, Main school)

In addition, aware of the power of the community in which they worked, many of the teachers preferred to stifle the criticisms they would otherwise have made:

> Fátima V. always reacted negatively to Carolina's parents, but when we had that meeting, she agreed to everything the father demanded. He banged the table twice and she accepted everything (Rita, President of Executive Board, Main School).
>
> Behind the scenes, people are always criticising the parents, saying they do this or they do that; but they are not in a position to say these things to their faces. Francisca, for example, was one of the most outspoken at Teachers' Committee meetings. But when she was brought face to face with the parents, she was incapable of saying a word (Rita, President of Executive Board, Main School).

The fear of criticising families was not unfounded. Indeed, the parents themselves were aware that the new model represented a major threat to the teachers' power and solidarity. "The teachers were always on the defensive, and secretive about a lot that went on in the school. Now that there are parents' representatives in the school, the teachers can no longer gang together to hush things up; they all come out into the open" (Patrícia, President of the parent's association, Main school).

And in fact problems very quickly started to "come out into the open". Within a few months of the implementation of the new management model, one of the most influential of the parents' representatives at Main School had resigned his post (Dr Joel). His resignation was far from discreet: it was accompanied by an open letter to the community in which he made a variety of ironical comments about the running of the Board of Studies and openly criticised some of the teachers' representatives, including the president. As a result of this attitude, the parents' association also drafted a "warning" letter to the school. Against such a backdrop, it could hardly escape the teachers' notice that a "new era" had begun in the school.

> We have to have a sense of civic responsibility, as is the case in our association, and resign when we feel we can no longer be of use. And this is precisely what Joel did. Constraints on his intervention meant that he could not participate effectively [protraction in the taking and implementation of decisions]. He therefore simply resigned. "Everyone understood perfectly what had happened. Whether they like it or not, *teachers can't go on deluding themselves that things haven't changed*" (Jorge, leader of parent association, Main school).

The change in attitude of certain teachers was not entirely due, however, to the presence of members of the community. It was also a response to the different political climate that separated the Teachers' Committee from the new organs of school management. Indeed, during this transitional phase, the teachers with sympathies closer to traditional bureaucratic/professional concepts were under-represented in the new organs of management, although they continued to participate actively on the Teachers' Committee. This under-representation

was the result both of the reluctance of these teachers to be involved in the new organs of management and of the influence exerted by school executives in the composition of the membership lists. The new managerial structures were therefore composed of individuals occupying "micropolitical" positions close to the school executives, or ones with little institutional influence:

> When at the beginning of the process we elected the new organs, all everybody thought was, "I hope it's the one in front, or the one on the other side, anyone but me". And we ended up with coordinators who were doing the job for the first time (Rita, President Executive Board, Main school).

The support of these new representatives for the new managerialism (or mere resignation, in some cases) did not, however, equip them to deal with the pressures brought to bear by their peers on the Teachers' Committee. Accordingly, even among teachers with important positions of responsibility in the new structures, there were examples of sudden *volte-face* in the move from one organ to another. These changes of opinion were then "justified", with greater or lesser skill, before the President of the Executive Council.

> Antónia (2nd president of the Board of Studies) came to tell me why she had changed her vote in relation to Carolina's class-change [on the Pedagogic Board she supported the change, whereas on the Teachers' Committee she voted against it]. She said she had done this because without the blessing of the new teacher it wasn't worth continuing to insist on the class-change (Rita, President Executive Board Main School).

> Lucinda and Cristina came up to me at the end of the Teachers' Committee meeting to explain why they hadn't backed my proposal to hold the end-of-year party in the Maria Matos Theatre. They thought their colleagues would be against it. So they voted for an open-air party, just to ensure that there would be something to mark the occasion. Even so, I was really annoyed when I left the meeting (Fernanda, 3rd President of the Board of Studies).

The "metamorphoses" of the representatives occurred particularly in situations which affected the teachers' professional autonomy, or when they were being subjected to excessive parental pressure. The reason the case of Carolina triggered such controversy was that it brought parental pressure and teacher

autonomy into confrontation at a high level. Indeed, not only was Carolina the daughter of one of the most active members of the parents' association, but class changes on grounds of bad behaviour were also one of the main internal taboos. Once the classes/groups were constituted, they remained intact and no alterations were "permitted", even in flagrant cases of unequal ethnic, social or sexual composition (see Chapter 3).

Despite the resistance, teachers in all schools had little choice but to acquiesce to various types of new interference in their daily routines (see also Chapter 6): restricted autonomy in the classroom (joint lesson-planning, year project, school project); less control over non-teaching activities (fixed timetables for year-coordination meetings, minutes); and tighter links with the community (participation of the Executive Council at parents' meetings, for example). School executives were, in fact, the first to admit that "school autonomy" imposed clear restrictions on teacher autonomy. "This process of autonomy is no simple matter. A lot of people [teachers] are against it because they see their freedom severely curtailed. In the old model, in practice, they did as they liked." (Inês, PEB, Sta. Maria Consortium). The actual disempowerment of teachers, however, varied considerably from school to school. Following a period of bitter conflict in all schools, which led to the "self-withdrawal" of the president of the steering committee of the Sta. Maria group and the president of the provisional committee of Pessoa School, power relations developed quite differently in each case. Because Main School and Gama School are particular examples of this contrast, I shall therefore now describe their evolution in greater detail.

"Transformational Leadership" and "Constrained Managers"

Rita (president of the Executive Board of Main School) and Joana (president of the Executive Board of Gama School) had much in common at the outset of the

implementation of SBM: they both had extensive management experience, gained through serving successive mandates; they were in charge of schools of a similar size (nº of pupils); both were extremely enterprising, having helped to set up various extra-curricular activities in their schools; and they shared management concepts very much in line with the official definition (school autonomy, team work, projects).

The main differences lay in the sociological composition of the two schools' population (upper middle class at Main School and socially disadvantaged groups at Gama School) and the career stages of Rita (middle) and Joana (end of career).

Their early experiences of SBM were also similar. Both came under fire from their peers and both went through a period of personal and professional exhaustion. Rita spoke daily of resigning (there were even rumours that she had threatened to take disciplinary action against her colleagues) and Joana got virtually no help with any of her administrative tasks.

> My colleagues refused to participate in the drafting of the documents [regulations and plan of activities]. They told me to my face, "You're getting so much money, so do it yourself (Joana, PEB, Gama School).

Joana, however, never managed to get beyond this phase of conflict. Rather, the antagonism persisted throughout the period of the observation, leading in the end to a virtual breakdown in relations between the executive council and the majority of teachers. This breakdown was evident in a number of ways: in actual testimonies from the executive council; in the difficulty in forming teams, thus forcing duties on teachers newly arrived at the school (president of the Board of Studies, year-coordinators); in the breakdown in personal and professional communication, which was reduced to notes and messages conveyed via third parties; and by the gradual loss of confidence of precisely those who had initially supported the executive board.

Thus, only those neo-managerial concepts that were relatively well defined by the law - the operation of the new organs, drafting of rules and regulations,

institutionalisation of forms of middle management - were fully implemented, albeit with great difficulty.

> I was nominated as project coordinator behind closed doors, because the older teachers refused to participate. For them it would have been a victory if the executive council had failed to find anyone for the position (Miguel, President of the Board of Studies, Gama School).

By the end of the period of observation the executive council of Gama School was completely isolated and in disarray.

> At a teachers' plenary meeting, they even called the president stupid, to her face (Raquel, contracted teacher, Gama school).
> The executive board now communicates with the teachers and other organs of the school by letter (Lara, associate teacher, Gama school).

At Main School, the conflict between teachers and managers ended in a totally different way - with victory for the executive board, the departure of most of the "dissidents" and their replacement with a more "docile" group of teachers (see Troman, 1996, for a similar account in England). Although the turnover of teachers, combined with Rita's kindly persistence, played an important part in the process, it was parental pressure that seemed to have been decisive.

It was this pressure, sometimes exacerbated by teachers' personal problems[9] that led to the departure of some of the less conformist/compliant teachers from Main School: Sara (pedagogic clashes with parents), Maria (pedagogic clashes with parents and the case of "Bruno"), Margarida (the case of Carolina), Francisca (the cases of Afonso and André), Antónia (forced to resign as president of the Pedagogic Board)[10].

It was reports of the bitter conflicts of the previous year (which also included the "relieving" of three teachers of their teaching duties) that also prompted the new teachers readily to accept the work-rules that Rita was striving to introduce despite the reluctance of many of her colleagues: joint planning, periodic evaluation, "standardisation" of the kind of activities carried out). The parents'

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[9] Sara became pregnant; Maria's daughter finished primary school, having changed schools

role in the process was, moreover, attested by virtually all those interviewed: "when the new teachers arrived, they started saying, "Last year the parents did this... last year the parents did that" (Simone, associate teacher, Main School) Thus it was that Rita managed, after a particularly tumultuous year (March 99 to June 2001), to recover the trust and prestige she enjoyed in the community. She also went ahead with changes in professional and organisational standards that went far beyond the requirements of the legislation itself:

- *She completely restructured the room allocation of Main School,* demanding that all classes of the same year should be given in the same block (despite legislation that gave priority of choice to the older teachers).

> There are details that people attach no importance to, but that are actually very important, like the fact that teachers with the same year are all under the same roof. That way they can be at the door, controlling the pupils and at the same time arranging or reflecting about an activity (Rita, PEB, Main School).

- *She turned the tasks of monthly planning and termly evaluation of activities into routines.* In addition, she introduced ways of overseeing the work done by teachers in this field (minutes of meetings, reports on activities, meetings with teachers and colleagues responsible for projects).

> Last year I suggested that they kept minutes of group meetings, and organised files for lesson-plans, worksheets and things like that. But Margarida immediately started moaning about the work. Isabel Rebelo too. But this year people accepted the idea, partly because a lot of those who rebelled last year are no longer here. And if they are, they're in such a minority that, well, they had no choice but to conform (Rita, PEB, Main School).

- *She put pressure on teachers to participate in several projects and responded to practically all requests for collaboration* (research work, teaching practice, use of the school for parties):

> You know I'm not authoritarian, but there must be someone to coordinate things and know what's going on. Because if you

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[10] The objectors remaining at the school had little in common in terms of age, pedagogic outlook and type of organisational involvement (Simone, Fátima V., Amália, Isabel R.).

> don't oversee things like that [projects and school activities], nothing gets off the ground. And I want a school that's different. That's why I had a meeting this week with all the different years. I had a meeting with the fourth year to talk about the Spanish projects and I talked to several groups about educational backing (Rita, PEB, Main School).

- *She contributed to the institutionalisation of practices to strengthen organisational identity and to manage human resources* (Christmas lunches, some birthday celebrations, end-of-year excursions, handing out flowers at the end- of-year ceremony).

- *she created internal structures congruent with the new legislative orientations* (she delegated responsibilities to middle management, concentrated on the definition of internal policies and wholeheartedly supported orientations from above.

> This year in the holidays I thought a lot about the way things went last year. I took stock of what had gone wrong. And I realized that I just didn't have time to do everything: talk to parents, mediate the conflicts that always break out in groups, accompany planning, oversee the office and the administrative side. And I thought: it doesn't always have to be me that attends group meetings, it doesn't always have to be me that commands respect. A lot of those things (minutes, intervals between meetings) are laid down in the regulations. The members of the group know the rules, and the coordinators are there to make sure they are complied with. And I also delegated a lot to Arminda (deputy head). Another of the good things about this year is that the president of the Board of Studies has the same approach as me. If there are problems in the schools, we agree about how to solve them. Things are much more shared. Last year I spent my whole time acting as fireman, putting out fires. This year I am free to concentrate on more important things (Rita, PEB, Main School).

Some of these measures are not *per se* distinctive features of neo-managerialist concepts: they could equally be included in a strategy of participant management. The application of the designation "neo-managerialist" comes from the manner in which they were defined, implemented and legitimised. Indeed, it should be mentioned that many of the directives were defined against

the wishes of the majority of the teachers in the school, only being finally asserted after successive refusals, because of "battle fatigue" (Fátima V., senior teacher, Main School), and at the "cost" of the departure from the school of many dissidents (in some cases teachers with a strong professional commitment).

On the other hand, although Rita was otherwise extremely pleasant in her relationship with the teachers, any opposition to directives from above was promptly and firmly dealt with. Indeed, having previously only exercised her authority over her colleagues by appealing to their professionalism and sense of duty, she now went as far as to take to task, in no uncertain terms, teachers who offered resistance to the new internal and external directives: assessment (Simone, associate teacher); re-allocation of classrooms (Isabel R., senior teacher); lack of *support for* school trips (Amália, senior teacher); non-participation in social activities (teachers of the second year, coordinated by Amália).

Furthermore, "Rita was known to be 100% behind the reforms," (Simone, Main School). Ideological sympathies also became an important criterion in the "co-opting" of colleagues into the carrying out of important tasks in the running of the school (presidency of the Board of Studies, year coordination, coordination of projects).

> I called people into the office and said, 'Look, I think you'd make a good year or project coordinator. I'm talking to you to get your reaction, but I'm quite prepared to talk to the group about it as well.

Major opponents, on the other hand, were kept away from positions in which they might be able to wield influence:

> This year I've been banished. Last year my work was down there in the gym. But they got rid of me and now I'm locked up in here (Fatima V., senior teacher, Main school).
> Fátima V. is a born leader. You only have to look at the knack she has for organising and motivating groups (Rita, PEB, Main school).

Besides political co-option, Rita did a great deal within the school to legitimise the new managerial concepts: she made the school available for formal ceremonies to mark the signing of partnership contracts between the State and companies; she treated teachers very differently according to their institutional involvement; she justified the institutionalisation of forms of "contrived collegiality" in terms of the needs of the organisation (minutes, files); and she institutionalised the practice of requesting financial returns from companies providing services within the school - even when opposed by one of her deputy heads.

Moreover, she showed no reservations whatsoever about the value of the new managerial concepts, which she reasserted whenever an opportunity presented itself. She was even writing a master's dissertation on the subject of "school culture" (autonomy, team work, partnerships with parents).

Common Patterns of Change

Having compared the situations of Main School and Gama School in terms of the implementation of the new SBM regime, I should emphasise that the type of work carried out by Rita (Main School) did not differ significantly from that done by other executives in similar circumstances. The main difference was a greater penetration of neo-managerialist concepts at Main School. Furthermore, the teachers themselves were aware of a common current of change running through a number of primary schools, especially in larger schools located in middle-class areas.

> At Princess School, where I worked last year, it's just the same. It's another very large school, with a lot of projects, and very active parents (Manuela, associate teacher, Main school).

This current of change was particularly noticeable in the following areas:

(1) Concern with the standing of the school.

This tendency was most noticeable in the rush to be a part of projects and other ventures that might enhance the image of the school in the eyes of the public

and the central authorities (competitions, games open to the community, pedagogic seminars). There were also signs of a certain preoccupation with non-teaching aspects of the school. Thus there was a clearly fresh concern with security (door-keepers), appearance (purchase of new overalls for the staff, decorating, minor structural alterations) and social relations (exhibitions, "sumptuous" end-of-year rituals)[11].

(2) More rigid hierarchical relations between managers and teachers.

The implementation of SBM led to a substantial differentiation in salary, functions and status between managers and teachers. There was even a change in the leadership style adopted by the executives:

> Sometimes you would hardly recognize Rita [President of the Executive Board and former Head]. In the old days she would listen to colleagues and rarely oppose them (Diana, associate teacher, Main School).
>
> Nowadays Rita gives orders and the others obey."(Nazaré, assistant at Main School)

Such testimonies would suggest that "leadership style" is not simply a question of personal choice, but an artefact of the managerial discourse through which reform is articulated. The legislation provides a set of opportunities for, and legitimation of, new "leadership" styles and the possibility to exercise new modes of authority.

It should be stressed, however, that those school managers who cut themselves off completely from the rest of the teaching staff, either because they were excessively authoritarian or because they concentrated more on administrative issues, were forced in the end to withdraw from the process (1st president of the Sta. Maria grouping; 1st president of Pessoa School), or else found themselves hampered at every turn (Gama School). The power of the tradition of closeness that existed between directors and directed, a legacy of the Revolution, was not totally destroyed with the implementation of the new SBM model.

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[11] "the school leavers party was a veritable wedding. Everyone was dressed up - parents, teachers and pupils" (Rita, PEB, Main School)

(3) Importance of financial considerations in school activities.

As already indicated, there was an increased concern, on the part of the schools, with the securing of external financial funding (hiring out of the kindergarten for birthday parties, widespread requests for financial sponsorship and equipment from companies supplying services to the school). And this included the pedagogic area: it became almost obligatory to participate in programmes and projects that would help to generate financial, human or material resources. Also, different levels of priorities were applied to projects, according to the funding received.

(4) "Dissolution" of the frontiers between the public and private sectors.

The emphasis given to financial returns and the increase in the number of partnerships led to a certain dissolution of the frontiers between the public and private sectors in the day-to-day running of the schools. This created problems in a number of areas: the establishing of property rights (who would the computers belong to if the contract with the computer company were terminated); the scheduling of activities (uncertainty as to whether the promised funds would be forthcoming); the exercise of authority within school boundaries (incidents involving Leisure Time Activities and affecting the overall image of the school, despite independent management of LTA). These differences were resolved through an increased formalization of relations with social partners, thus strengthening the "contracting out" process typical of contemporary societies.

(5) New cultural structure (*pragmatism, compliance* with *directives from the central administration, consideration for the "consumer"*).

One further effect of the rhetoric of autonomy, present in the public discourse of reform, was that the schools placed emphasis on the internal resolution of day-to-day problems (*pragmatism*) and the marginalization of those teachers who adopted a more critical stance towards families, the central administration

and the actual internal management of the schools (pressure for conformity and *compliance*). School executives, once again, played a vital role in this process.

> I don't want trouble-makers here. I don't want people who say, 'Look, Rita, I don't think that's right'. I want people who do something about solving problems (Rita, PEB, Main school).

> Last year the teachers complained about everything, even because there wasn't room for everyone at the lunch table. This year it's changed. There are different sittings for lunch, and no one complains. And that's how it should be - solving problems rather than creating them. It's the same with attacking parents; you don't hear half the criticism you used to hear" (Rita, PEB, Main School).

Despite being, by and large, elected by their peers, they to a great extent set themselves up as representatives of the higher authorities, supporting and overseeing their instructions and orientations. This particular brand of "leadership" was based neither on the implementation of personal managerial concepts nor on support of local initiatives. Rather it reflected a marked submissiveness in relation to the central administration and to the prevailing managerial paradigms[12] : the concept of the school as a united body that transcends different social identities (pupils) and professional cultures (teachers); the quest for total institutional involvement on the part of all members of staff (managers included); and the "opening up" of the school to the community (families in particular) .

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[12] Having presented this picture of the evolution of neo-managerialist perspectives in Portugal, it is important to stress that they progressed in a way not entirely unrelated to the old beauro-professional cultures (see also Clark & Newman, 1997). The *modus operandi* of school executives during this transition phase represented, paradoxically, one of the clearest signs of the possibility of "overlap" between the two forms of organisation. Indeed, it was the beauro-professional characteristics of many school executives that made a decisive contribution to the cultural and organisational transformation of Portuguese primary schools: a strong sense of duty with regard to orientations from the central administration and a tremendous capacity for self-sacrifice to deal with the loss of respect and steadfast resistance from colleagues

The cultural homogeneity displayed by school managers should not be separated from the strong hierarchical tradition characteristic of Portuguese primary education: another aspect of continuity through change.

SBM and Community Participation

Encouraging schools to be more responsive to parents and the demands of the community was one of the fundamental objectives of the new SBM model. Accordingly, the legislation limited the number of teachers[13] allowed to attend the School Assembly, the principal decision-making structure, and delegated to this body a wide set of responsibilities:

- for the definition of local educational policies (approving the educational project, the school regulations, the guidelines for producing the budget and the proposals for the school's autonomy contract).
- for keeping abreast of and evaluating the various proceedings (checking progress reports on the plan of activities, the results of the school's internal assessment process, and the balance sheets).

In addition, the School Assembly ensured that parents were represented on the Board of Studies, albeit in no fixed proportion to the number of teachers. Again though, the organisational impact of these directives varied considerably according to the context and location of the school (see Table 16). Indeed, in schools with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, the families participated neither in the debate concerning the new management model nor in the drafting of the school's internal directives. Moreover, they were either not asked to elect their representatives, or did not come up with nominations (Gama School and Main School respectively).

[13] Less than 50%

Table 16 - Parental Participation

Areas of Participation	Middle class schools (Main/Pessoa Schools)	Lower Class school (Gama/Magalhães School)
Public Debate and Explanatory Sessions for Parents	Yes	No
Choice of parents' Representatives	Nomination by the Parents' Association	Invitation of the Executive council (Gama school); Not nominated (Magalhães School)
Communication among parents' representatives	Yes, especially at Main school	No
Liaison with those represented	Through Parents' Association and Parents' meetings	No Liaison
Work groups (school regulations and project)	Yes (Main school)	No

These differences cannot be considered as peculiar to the transition phase. Indeed, at the end of this research, three years after the beginning of the implementation of the model, the parents of Gama School had still not managed to form an association:

> At the beginning of the year there was one extremely interested parent, who dealt with all the necessary documents for setting up a parents' association. And we're still waiting, because he couldn't put it together and lost interest (Graça, PEB, Gama School).

The situation was not so very different at Magalhães School. The parents' association never showed much interest in the new forms of participation and, following the end of the mandate of one of its most active members, ceased nominating representatives to the new school bodies:

> This year there are no parents' representatives at the School Assembly. Last year the president of the parent's association went, but hardly ever: on one occasion he arrived late and on another he didn't turn up at all. And this year they didn't

> nominate anyone. They don't seem very interested in the Assembly (Clara, Magalhães School).

The absence of elected representatives was settled at Gama School by means of invitations sent out by the management ("political co-opting"). However, no channels of communication were created either between representatives and parents, or between the parents who attended meetings of the different bodies. In this way, the parents had little political clout when it came to safeguarding the interests of the families. Testimonies reflect the isolation and vulnerability of these members:

> There is very little we can do in these circumstances. You are on your own. There is no Association, no one you can discuss things with. I don't even know the parents who go to the School Assembly (parents' representative on the Board of Studies, Gama School).

> The parents try to voice their opinion on the Board of Studies and at the Assembly, but they always hold back. Because they're known as the parents of such and such a pupil, they won't speak on behalf of the other parents or of an association. They're afraid it'll be taken out on their child (...). And the parents are also easily disarmed: "you can't do that because of the law"; "there's no point in writing to the DREL because the answer will be no" (Madalena, contract teacher, Gama School).

In middle class schools, the parents were aware, as we have seen, of the increased power conferred on them by the new management model: better access to information, the possibility of "brandishing" the public image of the school, certain changes in teachers' attitudes, more direct influence on the decision-making process. They did not, however, attach a great deal of importance to these new powers:

> In other schools the new model will have a greater impact than here. For a long time we'd been doing a lot of things that this new model only made official. And there are others that we shall have to go on solving in other ways, just as we had already been doing through contacts with the Town Hall, the local education authority and the school board itself (Rafael, Parent Association, Main school).

In fact, a major part of the power of upper middle class families lies in their ability to wield different types of influence at the same time - pressure by certain groups of parents on particular teachers, pressure on management, easy access to information and the central administration, exploiting the right to intervention (see also Chapters 4 & 6).

Socially underprivileged families, on the other hand, as we shall see in greater detail in the next chapter, not only find it difficult to exercise their right to intervene, as provided by the law, but also find it difficult to challenge or contradict the teacher. In schools catering to such families, pressure for change is exerted almost exclusively by the executive council or group coordinators, with the backing of a restricted number of "supporters" (Magalhães School) or by teachers in an institutionally precarious situation (the case of newly-arrived teachers at Gama School).

Although the new management model also involves the participation of the local authorities, their sphere of influence has in fact been minimal, and limited mainly to the following:

- making a certain amount of information available concerning local authority projects, backing and initiatives;
- lending a more ceremonial atmosphere to certain public events and commemorations.

Moreover, the action of local authorities nationwide, according to the Evaluation Commission report, has been remarkable for its detachment (Barroso, 2001).

To sum up, the main beneficiaries of the "opening up" of the school to the community, as advocated by the new model, would seem to be upper middle class families and managers working in these catchment areas.

Conclusions

The new school management regime was a project initiated by the State, as opposed to a response to direct or indirect demands on the part of social

partners (Afonso, 1999). The way in which it was implemented, by means of tight deadlines and meticulous regulation of the administrative procedures, served to reinforce the centralist matrix of the venture. However, the process was not without a certain change of attitude on the part of the central administration.

The new management model, however, did not stop at re-inventing the traditional kinds of dependence in Portuguese schools. It also made a decisive contribution to the institutionalisation of directives (drafting of school projects, flexible curricular management), mechanisms (internal evaluation, differentiation of duties and status between managers and teachers) and forms of regulation (widely standardized evaluation, increased parental participation) in line with the new neo-managerial paradigm.

This research would suggest, therefore, that Portuguese educational administration is going through a process of change that is not restricted to the purely formal sphere. The organisational structures and practices of Portuguese schools are being redefined along lines reminiscent of the principles of neo- and post-Fordism and, in a more general way, the processes of "conservative modernisation" taking place in various other countries.

Furthermore, the research highlights the point that the impact of the new managerial concepts depends largely on the school's catchment area, the experience and resistance of the staff, the chosen strategies for change and the style of leadership (see also Bowe *et al*, 1992; Arnott & Raab, 2000, Osborn *et al*, 2000).

The research also shows that the implementation of SBM considerably affects power relations within the school. The differentiation of duties between school executives and teachers, together with the creation of middle management structures, are the main modifications registered in this domain. Concomitantly, emphasis must be given to the important role played by school managers in legitimising and implementing the new SBM model: open support for the reform, the drawing up of lists of candidates, the co-opting of representatives, the marginalization of "detractors", defence of the new management

instruments, and closer contact with the families. It thus confirms that "management is both means and end in the reform process" and that school executives are key figures in the bringing to fruition of the new political and managerial concepts (Ball, 1994, p71; see also Arnott & Raab *et al*, 2000).

It should however be stressed that "transformational leadership" is only one of the facets of a wider penetration of the "entrepreneurial culture" in schools. This process also includes, in the case of Portugal, the following ingredients: changes in concepts of professionalism; concern with the image of the school; blurring of the frontiers between the public and private sectors; new ways of coordinating and managing duties; contracting of the relations between social partners (see also chapter 6).

In schools attended by middle-class pupils, it is clear that families now have more say in the running of the school (Main School and Pessoa School). This does not derive, however, exclusively from the areas of intervention created by Decree-Law N°115/98. It also has to do with the complex array of instruments and mechanisms which middle-class families can turn to their own advantage (see also Chapter 6). Meanwhile, in schools attended by less privileged pupils, parental status remains unchanged: the scenario continues to one of almost total separation between the school and the family. In these cases, there was not even a *pro forma* participation, through the nomination of parents' representatives.

There is also confirmation here of the risks associated with processes of democratisation of public services based on an abstract notion of "civil society" which ignores the processes of stratification and the power relations that are embedded in social and community contexts. The current research demonstrates, in fact, that the institutionalisation of parental participation in the school does not in itself constitute a factor in the democratisation of education. It is important to bear in mind the way in which the accepted practices of "choice" or "voice" are bound up with the cultural features of the different social groups (see Davies *et al*, 1989; Reay, 1998; Silva, 2001; see also Chapter 6).

As an example of "evolution in continuity", an expression frequently used in the final phase of the dictatorship, the local authorities have also continued to

keep a largely low profile. In this regard, the new management model has, at the time of writing, mainly contributed to a better exchange of information between the two spheres and improved mutual support of local initiatives of a "festive" nature (inaugurations, exhibitions, Christmas and end-of-year parties). Portuguese schools remain, largely, "local services of the state" (Formosinho, 1988).

Dependence on the central administration is fuelled by the way in which school executives view their role, which is far closer to that of "middle manager", representing the central administration internally, than that of true local leader. This situation may be the result of a number of different factors: the severe administrative constraints imposed upon primary education during almost the entire twentieth century; the persistence of a strong ethic of public service, based on the premise that the State is well-intentioned; the central position occupied by the State in this process of institutional reform, as opposed to the low profile of representatives of civil society (including academic and scientific institutions, which were more "cooperative" in the process than analytical of it). While not underestimating either the importance of these factors, nor the great selflessness displayed by certain school managers [14], the latter were among those with most to gain from the process of "devolution". Indeed, their professional situation was considerably improved by the new management model: their salaries rose in relation to those of other teachers; they no longer had to perform teaching as well as administrative duties; and they had the benefit of a variety of support structures (secretary, assistants, vice-presidents and year-coordinators). In addition, they gained additional credibility in a number of different areas: culturally, due to the superiority attributed to school executives by the neo-managerial concepts; operationally, due to the defining of new powers and prerogatives; and professionally, because of the legal sanctioning of prerequisites for the post (training and experience).

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[14] Rita, for example, maintained an unflagging dedication to the school, even during extremely difficult moments in her private life, including the discovery of cancer at an advanced stage and the death of her husband in tragic circumstances.

For all these reasons, the new school management model may be said to spell the "death sentence" for the "teacher among teachers" tradition which for decades characterized the position of school managers in Portugal. It is also, as we shall see in the following chapter, an extremely important component in the restructuring of the cultural, organisational and identity matrix of Portuguese primary schools.

CHAPTER SIX

CHANGING TEACHER'S WORKPLACE AND CONCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONALISM

The impact of School Based management (SBM) on schools has been the object of an ongoing debate that has highlighted the changing nature of teachers' work, conceptions of professionalism and working conditions (Hargreaves, 1994, 1998; Troman, 1997, 2000; Menter *et al*, 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Smyth *et al*, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002). In this chapter I shall attempt to summarize the most relevant aspects of this debate and to point to the transformations that have taken place in Portuguese primary schools - as places of work - as a result of the implementation of the new system of administration and management (Decree Law 115-A/98). The chapter will be divided into three sections. These will include, first of all, some of the main perspectives on the nature of restructuring schools and of teachers' work; secondly, the impact of new social and organisational structures with respect to teacher identity and working conditions (intensification, control, school hierarchies) and finally, the changes in power relations between "producers" and "consumers" associated with the new SBM model.

Primary Education, Market and Post -Fordism

Traditional representations associated with primary teaching conjure up an apparently idyllic world: a simple, cosy, almost family way of life - a universe where there is no place either for the aggressiveness characteristic of the business world or for the technological complexity and sophistication so often associated with new forms of labour organisation. However, divorcing themselves from this dichotomous vision, some authors have researched the impact of the marketization of education and the new organisational paradigms on the daily life of primary schools. Menter *et al* (1997), in particular, have argued that:

> in the transition from Fordist to post-Fordist regimes of accumulation, educational organisations have a key role. They are charged with the production of a differentially-skilled workforce divided, according to Soucek (1994) into three tiers: "highly skilled professionals and other core workers; specifically skilled peripheral full-time workers; generically-skilled peripheral part time workers or casual workers". Part of the production process involves the mirroring by educational organisations of these three categories of product within their own workforces (p22).

These authors also argue that the work of the market is not confined to introducing choice and competition into education provision. A very important component of the new agenda for education is concerned with the transformation of teachers' professional cultures and with forms of organisational restructuring based upon a corporate managerial approach (Blackmore, 1996; Ball, 1994, 2001). In the case of primary teaching, this transformation focuses essentially on the reshaping of the culture "of autonomy in primary school work and amateurism in its management" (Menter *et al* 1997, p15). The process of change is apparent in various aspects of the activity of primary teachers, namely those which involve the redefinition of professional duties, the creation of new management structures and the appearance of new school hierarchies.

Professional Duties and Delegation of Responsibility

The responsibilities of teachers have been widened in the form of extra duties, particularly in relation to curriculum management and the new administrative requirements (Menter *et al*, 1997; Wallace & Huckman, 1999). These changes may be characterised, as suggested by Woods *et al* (1997) in terms of the dilemmas, tensions and constraints that they produce in relation to teachers' work.

Dilemmas are "social situations in which people are pushed and pulled in opposing directions", in a cultural context, "which produces more than one

possible ideal world, more than one hierarchical arrangement of power, value and interest" (Woods, 1997, pp 20-21).

The restructuring of primary schools would seem to be producing a change in the origin and nature of primary teachers' dilemmas, which are shifting from the pedagogical sphere into those of curriculum, assessment, administration and global societal values (Alexander, 1995, Woods *et al*, 1997). At the same time there is a proliferation and intensification of contradictory situations and pressures which are affecting the very process of restructuring: vision and voice, mandates and menus, trust in processes and trust in people, structure and culture.[1] Furthermore, some of these dilemmas are turning into tensions and constraints:

> Tension is the product of trying to accommodate two or more opposing courses of action where choice is limited or circumscribed. Thus dilemmas become "tensions" where factors beyond the teacher's control impede decision-making (...) If dilemmas are personal and tensions are situational, constraints are structural, in the sense that they are beyond personal resolution within the immediate context. Constraint implies compulsion, force, repression of natural feelings. Constraint operates against the choice of perceived better alternatives (Woods *et al*, 1997, p21).

In the Portuguese reforms constraints are visible in different areas, namely in attempts to institutionalise "cultures of collaboration", whole-school planning, responsiveness to consumers, internal and external assessment, new organisational structures. These structural requirements have resulted in striking differences between present-day and traditional working conditions: an escalation in the number of meetings teachers are required to attend; difficulty in focusing-in ("pulling in different directions"); overplanning; negation of the identity or potential of teachers as "highly collaborative and highly autonomous professionals" [2].

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[1] see Hargreaves, 1998

[2] Woods et al, 1997, p29

However, these constraints do not necessarily imply a straightforward process of teacher "deskilling" or "proletarianisation". Teachers react to the reforms in a variety of ways (Pollard *et al*, 1994) and may also display some capacity for critical mediation in the process (Woods *et al*, 1997). There seems to be, however, considerable anxiety and frustration related to inadequate educational resources and professional support. Moreover, these feelings would seem to be expressed in situations of some interpersonal distrust (Menter *et al*, 1997; Moore, 2001). It is also worth mentioning that similar processes of work intensification seem to be taking place in other domains, such as health and public security, of the "welfare state": greater responsibility; increased paperwork interfering with "real" work; job insecurity; organisational or hierarchical scrutiny; preoccupation with entrepreneurism and consumer demands (Bottery, 1995; Clark & Newman, 1997; Menter *et al* , 1997).

The capacity for critical mediation in the reforms, at least in the educational context, seems to be related to various factors of a personal, professional and institutional nature: personal biographies and career trajectories; length of "exposure" to the process of change and capacity to exert some control over it; opportunities for "upward mobility"; existence of "collaborative" cultures and school context (Pollard *et al*, 1994; Woods *et al* 1997; Osborn *et al*, 2000). In other words, the distribution and form of dilemmas and tensions varies between institutions and between teachers.

New management structures

The research conducted by Menter *et al* (1997) indicated the existence of distinct changes in the management structure of English primary schools. Traditionally, these were run on a simple hierarchical system: head, deputy head , class teacher. The reform of school governance brought about a diversification of organisational patterns at this level of education and the creation of more complex processes of coordination. Many of the schools under analysis came to exhibit organisational features which had hitherto been distinctive

characteristics of secondary schools: forms of subgrouping, either by age-range or on a curriculum basis; senior teams.

This kind of modification to the organisational patterns of primary schools is confirmed by various authors, who describe a structure which gives rise to different types of management responsibility:

> *cross-school* organisation, for major coordination tasks potentially affecting all teaching staff (...); *departmental* organisation, for coordinating the work of two or more classes of pupils within a particular age range (...) curriculum coordination of one or, in a few cases, two curriculum areas (Wallace and Huckman, 1999, p58).

In a similar vein, Woods *et al* (1997) claimed that practically all the teachers they had spoken to had responsibilities for curricular management, "which included the supervision and the monitoring of the work of their colleagues" (p39). Their work also brought to light various risks and limitations associated with the new structures:

> It was the headteacher acting unilaterally who introduced the restructured system. It was not the outcome of collective decision-making, collaborative processes or even democratic consultation (...). The new system seemed designed to create role ambiguity (...). When role diversity means there is too much for the occupier of the role to do, this causes tension and conflict not integration and collaboration (p43)

These authors argue that the formal primary school structure exhibits features more closely resembling a "manipulative mosaic" than the "moving mosaic" promised by Toffler (1990).

New School Hierarchies

SBM has been presented as a management concept favourable to the creation of "flatter" organisations (see Chapter 3). However, this view is far from being either consensual or universal. In fact, several studies have stressed the particular dangers of the changes to certain socio-professional segments: deputy head (Woods *et al*, 1997); older teachers (Menter *et al*, 1997); peripheral

and casual workers (Robertson, 1996). These studies point to an increase in horizontal control and greater risks of "contrived collegiality" (Hargreaves, 1994, 1998; Menter *et al*, 1997; Smyth *et al*, 2000).

The reforms would also seem to have a different impact on males and females (Blackmore, 1996; Chapman, 1988), an issue which cannot be effectively addressed in this study, given the vast preponderance of females in primary education in Portugal [3].

Some authors, moreover, refer to an issue mentioned in the previous chapter, and in particular evidence during the transition stage to the new SBM model: the segmentation of the teaching profession based on the criterion of "political co-option". Indeed, some members of the profession may be given more autonomy than others, but only once they have passed what might be termed a "loyalty test" (Hanlon, 1998). "This implies that those who are prepared to "manage" on behalf of their employers may gain enhanced status and reward, but those pursuing the traditional welfarist agenda are no longer trusted and have to be controlled more directly" (Whitty, 2002, p69).

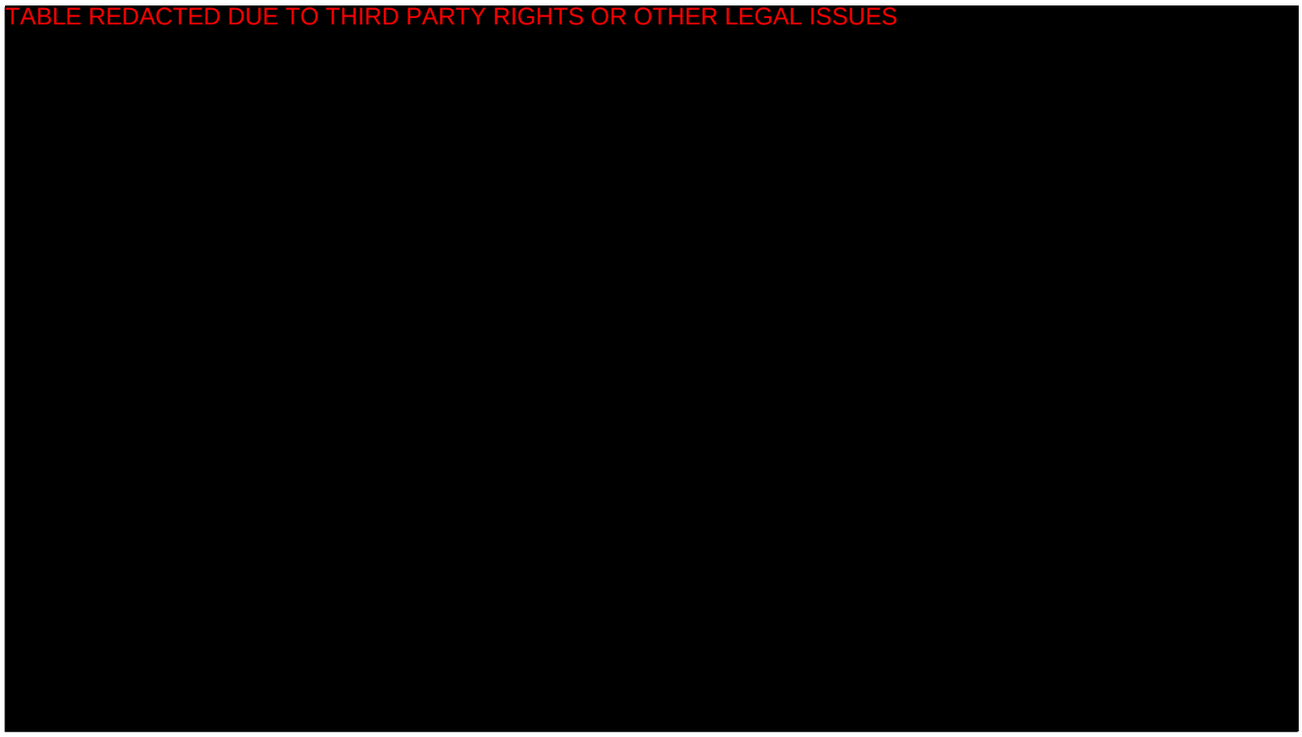
Furthermore, one cannot ignore the global background of "aggressive competition" against which the new political directives are being implemented. This may explain why some authors find that the new management models would seem to:

- display "modernist" trends towards a top-down, executive mode of decision-making rather than "post-modernist" promises of community participation and enhanced professionalism (Backmore, 1996).
- use the neo-managerial instruments "in a context that is arguably more neo-fordist than post -Fordist in character" (Whitty, 2002, p71; see Table 17).

[3] only six of the teachers who participated in this study were men. With the exception of one who was on psychiatric sick leave, they all held coordination or management positions (both before and after the implementation of the new model)

Table 17

Post-Fordist Possibilities: Alternative Models of National Development



Adapted from Brown *et al* (1997, p175)

Finally, as education appears to be devolved from the State to an increasingly marketised civil society, "consumer rights" will tend to prevail over "producer rights" and "citizens rights" (Ball, 2001, 2003; Whitty, 2002). This is a phenomenon that has been identified even in countries where the system of parental choice has not been officially sanctioned (see van Zanten, 1996, 2002; see also Chapter 3).

The issues introduced above provide the points of focus through the remainder of this chapter.

New Organisational and Social Structures

Teachers' Professional Identity: New Practices, New Concepts

The institutionalization of SBM models has been seen as an important challenge to teachers' professional cultures and practices (see Chapter 1). The present study, would confirm this hypothesis. It shows, however, that this process is far

from being straightforward or automatic: changes both affect and are affected by local conceptions of professionalism. The research indicates both aspects of continuity and change in the professional identity of Portuguese primary teachers.

The continuity is evident in the survival of an identity matrix within which primary education is still seen as essentially a moral project centred on the children:

> I'm going to tell you what I always think and say: in this country it would never occur to anybody that we [primary teachers] hold the world in our hands. I compare the children to a treasure, a precious stone which only needs cutting. If we succeed in cutting it properly, we'll have a wondrous jewel. If not, ... (Sofia, senior teacher, Main School).

Moreover, as is evident in other contexts, primary teachers continued to regard their profession as much more than just a simple job (Nias *et al*, 1989; Woods *et al*, 1997). Professional problems went beyond the classroom and took over teachers' private lives:

> When you work with children, you can't separate things. You can't just close the classroom door and say, 'Well, that's that for today'. You can't forget that John's father has been sent to prison, or that Paula's parents are getting divorced. We end up taking the children's problems home with us (Madalena, associate teacher, Pessoa school).

However, in spite of the importance given to the children, an increasing number of teachers were finding it hard in their daily working lives to give due priority to them. This was most noticeable in the early stages of implementation of important legislative directives [4] or the performance of new organisational duties. The pressure of "school tasks" led, in some cases, to lengthy periods of inattention to the children:

> This is the first time in my life that this has happened. Here we are in January, and I haven't even finished observing all the children. It's been a very difficult time [putting into effect of the

[4] new organs of school management, curricular reorganisation

> new organs of management]. And now I'm president of the Board of Studies, it's going to be even worse (Amália, president, Board of Studies, Main School).
>
> This first term has been a disaster: first the releasing of balloons [out of solidarity with Timor], then the meetings and all those new documents [rules and regulations]. I'm utterly exhausted. And apart from that, I can't give the children half the attention I should (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

Other teachers expressed their tensions in more general terms: "These days we have to spread ourselves so thinly, what with parents, projects, meetings etc. And sometimes it's our work [in the classroom with the children] that suffers" (Érica, senior teacher, Pessoa School).

The teachers coped with these "tensions" and "constraints" in different ways. Some altered their scale of priorities according to immediate needs. Others adopted a more "political" attitude to the new responsibilities. Even so, there were many teachers who found it difficult to cope with the new pressures (see also intensification of work). The problems invariably arose when intense activity at school was exacerbated by family problems, special duties or parent pressures:

> Gilda went into a depression and was away for a long time. She came one day to hand in her doctor's certificate and just broke down in tears. She also had family problems. When personal problems are compounded by excessive pressure at school - all kinds of projects and exhibitions not to mention intense pressure from the class, because the children here are very active, almost hyperactive ...When you get both things together, there are always teachers who just can't take the pace ... (Armanda, deputy head, Main School).

Patience with teachers' personal and emotional problems seemed, however, to be running out. Parents' complaints were increasingly frequent (teachers' late arrivals at schools, substitution of teachers, courses). It was also noticeable that there was pressure from the executive board for teachers to redefine their professional identity along more traditionally male lines, that is, a clearer separation between home and work, with priority given to the latter:

> Cristina F. is that dark teacher, the one who has a baby and is completing her training. She's a very difficult ... well, she never has time for anything, always rushing to be with the baby. I think we should organise our private and our professional lives. People just want to give their lessons and then rush off home without participating in anything. That's Cristina's case and people are going to have to start getting their priorities right (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

This attitude of "reconciling priorities" was in contrast to traditional orientations at this level of education, in which heightened sensitivity towards teachers with children of their own meant that the presence of even very small children (three months to three years) was accepted and even relatively common at meetings of the school governing bodies (field notes, Main School, 1st phase of the research). Moreover, having young children was one of the arguments used, in the previous phase of the study, to "justify" the fact that there was little team work.

These data would indicate, as suggested by Clark & Newman (1997), that the restructuring of public services has a powerful impact on the "private" world of family and community:

> To compete in the managerial career stakes now means demonstrating commitment through long (often excessive) hours and being able to cope with high stress. Staying on to be present at the crucial meeting to deal with the latest crisis has to take precedence over family, relationship or community commitments: whether the meeting is effective or not is sometimes less significant than being seen to have the commitment to be there (p74).

Rita's remark quoted above is also interesting because it shows that professional commitment is only recognized when harnessed within the strict confines of the school. Indeed, as the interview extract reveals, Cristina F. was attending a complementary training course, which in Portugal can involve twice as many hours as a Master's Degree course. However, this was totally irrelevant in Rita's (negative) assessment of her colleague's professional commitment.

I should, however, point out that pressures for change in teachers' professional identity did not, at this stage in the research, come only from management structures. Some of the teachers appeared, especially towards the end of the observation, to have taken on board certain aspects of the new professionalism. This was most noticeable in respect of support for team work, which was being viewed in a way that went beyond the earlier parameters of personal and professional affinities.

> I consider that even when there is no great personal *rapport*, we should all make an effort to work as a team. Besides, the parents around here know the school well, and if colleagues are seen to be working well together inside the school, it shows on the outside. Then people say, 'That school works well: it's a good school' (Catarina, associate teacher, Main School).

In the area of organisational investment, mention should also be made of certain teachers who have started to include school organisational dynamics among their reasons for opting for a particular school. The qualities of these "emergent professionals" were positively recognized by the executive board:

> In the selection process, both Teresa and Cristina were placed in schools close to where they live, but they preferred to stay here. I think that's an important decision. Cristina in fact lives in Ramada, and the school is right behind her house. But even so she's staying on here. She says it's a more go-ahead school, that she feels comfortable with me, and other things ... (Rita, president executive board, Main School).

> This year I was talking to two teachers who were placed here for the first time, and the first question they asked was whether lesson plans were done together, as a team. It seems that we are going to have a good teachers' group (Armanda, deputy head of Main School, at the beginning of the second year of school autonomy).

Changes in areas relevant to teachers' professional identity also applied to the process of evaluation. In particular, in this field there was increasingly frequent reference to the parents, in middle class schools, as a yardstick of "good

practice" [5]. These data suggest that, although the reform in school governance is only apparently in its infancy in Portugal, primary teachers nonetheless display patterns of change similar to those identified in other countries:

> Teachers' sense of personal and moral accountability as indicated by responsibility to pupils and to themselves as professionals remained strong but there is a marked increase in accountabilility towards colleagues and parents (...) Therefore teachers are now having to take into account a wider range of what might be seen as conflicting obligations (Osborn, 2000, p49).

This conclusion will be corroborated in the following sections.

New Responsibilities and Intensification of Work

The new governance of schools has brought with it new areas of activity for Portuguese primary teachers: wider-ranging responsibilities for the schools, new organs of management, middle management structures, internal evaluation. This transformation was reflected in the way teachers described their new daily school routine:

> In comparative terms, the new model means more work for the teachers. It takes up a lot of time because there are various organs and lots of meetings. There are lots of meetings because in the old days there was only the monthly School Board meeting, whereas now we have the School Assembly meeting, although not all the teachers are members, the Board of Studies, which meets several times a month according to the subjects to be discussed. Then we have the Teachers' Board meeting, and then, as our work is organised by years, we have the year-coordinators' meetings, which are usually monthly. And on top of all that there are sometimes special meetings, because of some project or party (Manuela, senior teacher, Main School).

This increase in responsibilities has not, however, been the cause of any generalized grievance. Indeed, with the exception of the phase in which the new structures were being put in place, and there was exponential growth in

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[5] "The part went really well; the parents really enjoyed it","the community enjoys this kind of activity"

the number of activities in all schools, teachers' reactions to the new professional demands varied significantly according to their pedagogic ideas and to the locality of the school.

The main criticism, as we would expect, come from the teachers with a more negative attitude towards new managerial guidelines:

> Portugal has always been a bureaucratic country, which is why the schools have always been swamped in red tape. But now it's worse than ever. Everything requires a report, everything is bound by rules and regulations, everything needs evaluating, everything (Fátima V., senior teacher, Main School).

Conversely, teachers who looked more favourably on the new concepts also made light of the new responsibilities:

> I think the school has changed a bit - it's more open and more cooperative. In particular there is more cooperation among the teaching staff. Of course there's more work, but that's all par for the course (Cristina, associate teacher, Gama School).

> The school is very open and very go-ahead, and obviously higher expectations mean more work (Teresa, associate teacher, Main School).

Most of those interviewed[6], however, had a moderately critical attitude towards the increased responsibilities. This was not unrelated to the fact that Portuguese primary teachers continued to enjoy, in particular in schools with no parental influence or threat of closure, a considerably free hand in the management of their organisational investment (time spent in meetings, management of projects and group activities). However, in upper middle class schools it was a very different story (see producers and consumers, below; see also Chapter 5).

At Magalhães School, albeit for different reasons, associated with the desperate need to survive, there were also very few attempts to shirk the increased workload:

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[6] about three-fifths

> It's normal in schools to put on parties at Christmas and Easter, but in this school we are also virtually obliged to raise money for them - so we have to do more work. At Christmas we have to organise the party and then sell raffle tickets and goodness knows what else. So we're tired out and get to the point where the least little thing anyone says is enough to make us fly off the handle. We're always so touchy with each other, because we're so sick and tired of it (Rosália, associate teacher, Gama School).

There were, however, certain areas in which parental pressure, pressure from school governors and even pressure from the State (see the impasse in defining activities outside class time) proved to be totally ineffectual. Playground and lunch duty and free-time supervision have always been anathema to the teachers. The lowly status of educational support duties in Portugal (supervision of children, cleaning), associated with the absence of a "social" tradition in state schools, may go some way to explaining teachers' resistance to these kind of duties.

This resistance also shows that teachers adopt a selective attitude towards the heavier workload (see also Whitty *et al*, 1997). Their reaction depends not only on the *amount* of work but also on the *quality* of the new duties: reduction or enhancement of professional status, congruence or incongruence with teachers' frames of reference, professionalization or deprofessionalization. This assertion obviously does not mean that the issue of increased workload is purely figurative. Family and psychological problems produced by an ever more demanding professional life were mentioned by all those interviewed (including school executives).

Changing Teacher's Professional Roles and Forms of Control

An increased workload was not the only change in teachers' lives produced by the implementation of the new SBM model. There was also a redefining of their roles, which emphasised the non-teaching side of their activity. The new management model gave way to a complex organisational structure that consisted of four organs of management (school assembly, executive board,

pedagogic board, administrative board), one consultative body (teachers' plenary) and various types of co-ordination (year, nucleus, cycle and project). There was also, in the larger schools, the possibility of an advisory committee to the executive board. The more "innovative" schools also frequently set up work groups for certain activities, each specifically co-ordinated (school magazine, spring games, drafting and reformulation of documents). Indeed, the new SBM model, apart from imposing a wide range of management structures, also quite clearly favoured the implementation of forms of middle management.

The new organisational structures and work guidelines made evasion of administrative responsibilities extremely difficult. Thus something akin to a phenomenon detected in other countries could also be observed in Portuguese primary schools: "willing or unwillingly teachers were behaving increasingly as collaborative professional workers" (Osborn *et al*, 2000, p93).

Teachers' reaction to these changes varied, as has already been mentioned, according to their concept of professionalism and to the social context of the school. However, in general they welcomed the expansion of practices of cooperation, especially the "comfortable" ones (Little, 1990). This was not the case with the institutionalisation of the instruments of regulation of the new collegiate practices: minutes of meetings, organisation of lesson-plan files, recording of absences, drawing up of activity reports. The adoption of new forms of surveillance led to a particularly bitter conflict between teachers and managers. Parental pressure in middle class schools, the knock-on effects of the change itself and the marked mobility of teachers combined to enable managers gradually to impose forms of contrived collegiality:

> Last year I made the proposal [for files of lesson plans and minutes of meetings] and nobody agreed. Margarida said immediately, "What a lot of work!", and Julia also started protesting. But this year, when I produced the same proposal, there were so few dissenters that they had no choice but to accept [many of the more rebellious teachers left the school during this time]

> To begin with people grumble, but they gradually get into the swing of things, and even those who disagree eventually keep quiet (Rita, president executive board, Main School)

For the teachers there only remained, in some cases after prolonged discussions, a certain flexibility in the choice of timetable, in deciding the frequency of meetings and in the "implementation" of group decisions. Only at Gama School was resistance taken a step further: the "boycotting" of the recording of absences at intermediate meetings (third- and fourth-year teachers), of group activities in the school (parties, projects) and an attempted boycott of the actual formation of the new management bodies (see Chapter 5).

In the remaining schools, those who opposed the "new professionalism" could only resort to strategies of "incorporating" the new directives (Menter *et al*, 1997) and to denying that there was anything new about the practices derived therefrom:

> They say that it's terribly interesting and will have immense spin-off for the school, bla, bla, and so we start the project. Then there's the School Health project, and this project and that project. It's all fantastic for the school, and it's another project. And so on. When we get to the end of the year and take stock of all the projects, what has been done? They talk about the Health project and say marvellous, congratulations, you've done a lot ... and in reality nothing has been done, nothing at all that wouldn't normally be done (Cristina, senior teacher, Pessoa School).

It should, however, be stressed that at the school where neo-managerialist pressures were brought to bear most forcefully, the teachers managed to turn the new interactions between colleagues into something of a defensive barrier against the control exerted by parents:

> Parents in this area are in the habit of making comparisons [between teachers]. Last year we had a lot of problems with that, and the teachers were afraid. Now that we do our lesson planning together, they feel more confident. It stops a parent suddenly saying: "in the other class they're further on in the syllabus" or "my son hasn't got access to this or that programme". And even if the parents try it on, the teacher

> knows what's going on and can stand up for himself (Dalila, associate teacher, Main School).

Collegial practices also proved to be of considerable support in the changes brought about by the process of organisational and curricular reform in basic education. "This process of curricular reorganisation is driving us all mad. If it weren't for the support of our colleagues, I don't know where we'd be" (Simone, associate teacher, Main School). Indeed, keeping au fait with all the innovations was something that could not be ignored at Main School.

> When I arrived at school today, Armanda [the deputy head] was worried sick. The parents had handed in a petition making a number of demands on the school. The problem had come up in one of the classes, when a new teacher couldn't explain to the parents either what the project area was or the learnacy programme. You know yourself what these parents are like: they came round straightaway with a letter and endless demands. They want the school to give support to the teacher; they want a psychologist, and so on (Rita, president of Executive Board, Main School).

The new institutional rules and regulations were not accepted at Main School, however, without the conflict between "producers" and "consumers" taking on unusual proportions: removal of teachers with children from the 'chalkface' (3 cases); embittered retirements (2 cases); resignation of presidents of the Board of Studies (2 cases); voluntary transfers to other schools (at least six cases); and an indeterminate number of absences due to overwork.

This was why the President of the executive board frequently reiterated the importance of collegiate practices as a defence strategy against the local community:

> Newville is like a village, like a neighbourhood. The parents get together in the café and within seconds they all know what's going on in the school. And that's when the problems start: "my daughter hasn't done that yet" or "my son's class is behind the others". And it's all because the teachers don't present a united front. If they worked as a group and did their lesson planning together, there wouldn't be these complaints. That's what happened in the fourth year last year: there may have

> been problems, but the teachers were united in dealing with them (Rita, president Executive Board, Main School).

It should however be emphasised that the defence of teachers against parents was not the only reason why managers exerted pressure when it came to the institutionalisation of the new forms of collegiality (files, minutes, absences). Besides ideological factors, which cannot be underestimated [7], it was clear that the new instruments of regulation also made it easier to control the teachers:

> Last year there were conflicts within the groups; the teachers were fed up and eventually stopped planning or doing anything else together. I didn't know about it, because nobody called on me. This year it's different, because I see the reports and the files are in my possession (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

> Anyone who looks at these files knows practically everything that's going on in the school. The only thing you can't see is what people are thinking. Everything else is there (Simone, associate teacher, Main School).

From the point of view of school managers, the new style of professional relations held the added advantage of making it possible to delegate responsibilities among middle management, in order to divide up the teaching staff (small units) and to help break up and settle institutional conflicts.

> It was lucky that we espoused the cause of middle management in schools. When there were no year coordinators, I was always having to chase the teachers, asking them for projects and lesson plans. I was constantly on their backs and had a lot more problems and trouble than I have now. Now it's the co-ordinators who take all the flak. Only the other day Luzia [the co-ordinator of the third year] said to me: 'Now I understand what you went through'.

While the organisational restructuring has gained strength, pedagogic practices have been given progressively less emphasis. Unless these traditional virtues were practised within the new framework of organisational priorities, they came in for criticism rather than praise:

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[7] like managers' loyalty to the administration (see Chapter 5)

> There have been a lot of battles in this school, and that's one of the reasons I was saying I had had enough - because you work and work and at the end of the day it looks as if you've done nothing. I'm actually conscious of my limitations, so I avoid getting involved in endless projects and activities. Otherwise I end up neglecting everything, even my class. For instance, at the moment I've got an autistic child in my class, and as I don't know very much about autism, I had to attend a training session on the subject. But people don't understand or appreciate things like that here in the school. It's just projects and more projects. That's what counts. Everything else is criticized. And even when I stay on late, it's always in the line of duty. However late we stay, it's never beyond the call of duty (Rosália, associate teacher, Magalhães School).

This type of problem serves to illustrate the penetration of a neo-managerial kind of peer pressure in Portuguese schools. Through such procedures, workers are encouraged "to adopt managerial concerns and behaviors to ensure their colleagues remained attentive to their tasks and aware of each other's level of contribution to the productive effort" (Menter *et al* , 1997, p65).

This process was especially noticeable at Main School, where the "dissidents" were actually publicly denounced:

> It upset me very much at the school assembly to hear that certain groups were not pulling their weight. We have worked just as hard as the others; it's just that it's with our pupils, in the classroom (Amália, senior teacher, Main School).

However, things rarely got to this point. Once the principal dissenters had been "defeated", the natural pride, sense of duty and traditional obedience of the teaching profession helped with the institutionalisation of the new practices:

> I think this [the formalization of collegiate relations] is like everything else. People have a sense of pride, and when they see others working, they don't want to be left behind. I love it when I see them talking together, to see which group has drawn up its rules [for the running of the year coordinations] and showing each other their files [of minutes and lesson plans]. They were so uncooperative at the beginning ... Now even Isabel [one of the leading dissenters] insists on being present at the year meetings. She's afraid they'll decide something she doesn't know about, and she'll look bad in the

> eyes of the parents (Rita, president executive board, Main School).

> Only yesterday we were discussing the curriculum changes that are going to be made, and I simply asked, "But is that imposed?" "No, but it came out in the decree, and has to be done." And that's where the trouble starts: we're all so concerned with toeing the line that nobody stops to think or question, or even give an opinion or say that we disagree. And I mean *nobody* . . .
> P. - But why is that?
> R.- When they talk about first-cycle teachers, there's still the idea that a woman is a wife and mother who is socially correct at all times and never makes waves. School is a continuation of that role, so in terms of teaching, nobody raises issues: things are defined and taken for granted, and we comply because that's the way it is (Patrícia, associate teacher, Pessoa School).

For all these reasons, together with a favourable political context, criticism of teachers who failed to espouse the new managerial directives became commonplace in schools, transcending the influence of the executives.

The changes in Portuguese primary schools have thus come into line with the neo-managerial model that inspired them:

> The government 's hope must be that the implementation of the systems and ethos of management will take root sufficiently to legitimise new mechanisms and routines and to make them appear to be self-imposed or collaboratively adopted (Raab, 1991; quoted in Menter *et al*, 1997, p64).

It was when it came to group activities that the changes were most noticeable (school magazines, exhibitions, parties). The previous segmentation was giving way to a solid thematic organisation, centred on each school year and on the respective project, and this was of no mean importance in terms of the professional image projected. There was an increasing obligation to participate in these activities:

> Last year, when we wanted to put on an exhibition, to do our bit, we started on the basis of 'who will do what?'. The result was that people brought things and left them, and it was up to the others to organise it. This year we did things totally differently, and what I said to Rita was, 'yes, there are projects, there are magazines and there are exhibitions, but each year is

> responsible for them. I don't care whether it's A or B or C. For instance, we put on a Christmas exhibition. And what happened? All the teachers in the group were in the gym, putting up their work. Each teacher was responsible for the image they projected (Simone, project coordinator, Main School).

The actual terminology used, especially at Main School, reflected this movement of change. Non-teaching activities would be dismissively labelled as "paperwork" or "red tape" (reports on projects, statistics charts). By the end of the period of observation, they had been "elevated" to the category of "[good] organisation": "This must be the best organised primary school in the country: there's an index-card, a circular, a report for everything" (Simone, project co-ordinator, Main School).

Changes in pedagogic practices were less noticeable: "You can see that there's more sharing of duties in the school, for instance when it comes to exhibitions and group work. But in [classroom] practices it's another story. It's more in terms of curricular objectives and projects that things are shared. In terms of strategies and teaching models, there still isn't much collaboration" (Joana, senior teacher, Pessoa School).

This "exchange" was limited due to the fact that most of the teachers were already set in their ways. Thus, similar to what happened with previous forms of spontaneous cooperation, most teachers used group work as a way to enhance rather than redefine their own practices:

> We get a lot out of exchanging ideas and worksheets with each other. But a deeper change is another thing . . . after so many years, we all have our own personal style (Ermelinda, senior teacher, Main School).

Participation in organisational projects or programmes for inter-school cooperation was governed by similar principles".. Teachers would "slot" the new activities into the core curriculum, but not integrate them fully into their teaching routine:

> As we've all got these new projects, we have to make time for them. So whenever possible, we take time out of the syllabus to get ahead with them (Francisca, associate teacher, Pessoa School).

> We have to be able to organise and manage time so that we can devote a bit of time to the projects. In practice, we divide up our time.
> E - And how does this time division work?
> S - Mostly we occupy the time as we used to in the old, traditional days, with academic and arts subjects and school textbooks. Then we have to divide up the rest of the time between the projects. There are also projects that have something to do with the syllabus content and are, let's say, complementary (Sara, senior teacher, Main School).

In this respect, the penetration of the new management concepts continued to be greater in the administrative than in the pedagogic domain, thus confirming trends reported in other countries: managerialism and managerial discourse focus more on the systems of organisation than on teaching and learning in the classroom; see also Ball, 1994; Webb and Vulliamy, 1996, Menter *et al* 1997; Whitty *et al*, 1997, 1998; Osborn, 2000).

In the case of Portugal, there were other specific factors which helped to perpetuate the separation between organisational and pedagogic dynamics; school executives continued to show a certain respect for privacy in the classroom, with inspection concerning mainly formal and administrative aspects (planning, minutes, class composition); external evaluation was in its infancy, so that the image of the school depended largely on its sociological composition and degree of "initiative" (projects, extra-curricular activities, logistic structures).

The new pedagogic organisation thus meant, essentially, a certain standardisation of practices in a limited number of areas: syllabus progress rates, special activities (study visits, projects), use of educational resources (worksheets, assessment sheets, textbooks). The "epicentre" of this

standardisation was the school year. Whole -school planning, "school culture", the school project, and flexible organisation of work (projects, activities, functional areas) were barely noticeable in the majority of the primary schools under analysis. Taken together, the changes mentioned suggest a restructuring process closer to neo- than to post-Fordist models. The use of the designation "neo-Fordist" to describe the process of change in Portuguese primary schools does not mean that this is to the exclusion either of aspects relating to development in bureaucratic rationality or of certain projects and practices developed along more post-Fordist lines (see Chapter 5). It is a matter of emphasis.

In this respect, however, it should be emphasised there were considerable differences between the schools under analysis. These differences went from token compliance with the legislation (Gama School) to distinct over-conformity (Main School) in a variety of ways: the importance of middle management (effective delegation of duties, connection between fixed and flexible structures, degree of formalization of activities); redefining of space (creation of nuclei, according to the different school years); an attempt to bring together all the services in the school (objectives and basic practices). In spite of the thoroughgoing process of organisational and curricular restructuring they had managed to put in place, the directors of Main School were determined to extend the area of convergence with the new management concepts:

> At the year level, things are now running really well. On the school level, there's still a lot to be done.
> I've been thinking and wondering . . . It was a good idea to set up these new pedagogic structures (year coordinations), but they can also bring their own problems. You lose the true dimension of the school, the idea of a school culture and project. That's why I'm going to set up other groups, with teachers from different years, for the school magazine and other things, so that there's more flexibility in the teams and the projects. We did this, a bit, with this year's Christmas exhibition. Each group was responsible for collecting materials for the notice board, by theme and not by year, as used to be the case. This way we're taking stock and breathing new life and

> impetus into the school (Rita, president executive board, Main School).

New Protagonists, New School Hierarchies

The implementation of SBM models, by helping to expand and highlight managerial roles, has brought about significant changes in the social structure of Portuguese primary schools: it has widened the gap between managers and teachers; created a more complex social matrix, due to the diversity of the new managerial duties; and resulted in the emergence of new sources of social prestige and legitimacy.

The "senior" teachers whose professional identities favoured the pedagogic role, were the main losers in this process (Menter *et al*, 1997, Woods *et al*, 1997; Woods & Jeffrey, 2001). Even in schools with the greatest resistance to the new managerial concepts, the influence of the more experienced teachers was gradually eroded. Exclusion from the new management structures, either self-imposed or through political co-opting, proved to be a fatal strategy for many senior teachers. They lost (direct) access to information, the chance to air their opinions in the new organisational structures and the ability to influence school policies. They were reduced to "boycotting" tactics, which lay them open to the accusation of wanting to do absolutely nothing. In addition, they saw the rise of new local protagonists, favoured by the new judicial and institutional framework: presidents of a variety of bodies, advisers, coordinators, parents' representatives (in middle class schools).

This process varied in intensity from school to school, being less rigorous at Pessoa School [8] and Magalhães School (where the only senior teacher was also acting head). Conversely, it was completely overwhelming at Main School, where the main supporters of the new management concepts were at the intermediate stages of their careers (including the headteacher herself). The loss of power of senior teachers at Main School is clearly illustrated by the descent

of Amália, who, within the space of a few years, was relegated from a leading role (president of the school assembly) to a walk-on part, with occasional periods of actually being "persona non grata":

> I'm very hurt by the attitude of the executive board. When I had an accident, they didn't even phone me. My colleagues rang me, and even some of the new teachers. But from them [executive board], not a word. It seems hardly possible, after so many years (Amália, senior teacher, Main School).

> Amália is always complaining that nowadays everything is done through Fernanda (president of the board of studies) - everything through Fernanda (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

The rapid penetration of the new managerial concepts at Main School also proved fatal to the expectations of career advancement nurtured by certain senior teachers on the basis of traditional professional patterns.

> Now that Armanda has retired, I know that Alexandra and Isabel are expecting to be offered the job of deputy heads. They're the longest-serving teachers in the school, and they've already sent me messages: "that they're close to retirement, that they deserve a rest, that they would then keep the increment when they retire". But tell me honestly - how can I offer them the job? I need people who'll help me, not people who, if they think fit, will turn against me (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

At the end of the period of observation, when the idyll of collegiate relations had worn off (see Freire M., 1992), there were also conflicts of a pedagogic nature. These conflicts mainly arose when teachers found themselves barred from doing projects or activities other than those officially prescribed and/or when they considered there was nothing to be gained by joint planning and reflection, because of ideological, material or personal obstacles. However, the prevailing institutional logic was increasingly of a technical and instrumental nature: organisation and formal regulation of year groups, projects, tasks and collegiate relations.

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[8] a long history of "innovation", in which many senior teachers took part, smoothed the change at this school

The new school protagonists were teachers who felt empowered by the new managerial concepts: an admix of "emergent professionals" (Pollard *et al*, 1994) and "manager teachers" (Woods *et al*, 1997). It was this type of professional that managers strove to retain in the school, using the parents' support if necessary:

> Patrícia (parents' representative) and I are not going to stop pestering Lucília (Regional Education Department) until she assures us of the continuation of Lutécia (co-ordinator of the third year and candidate for the post of school adviser) (Rita, president executive board, Main School).

In schools where family influence was in evidence, this was rarely restricted to institutional support for management decisions. In middle class schools, the "customer's gaze, installing an ever-watching eye on the workforce" (Menter *et al*, 1997, p65) was more than a mere figure of speech. On the contrary, it represented one of the major constraints with which teachers had to contend on a daily basis.

Producers and Consumers

In market and neo-managerial systems producers are supposed to respond to consumers' wishes and interest. In this section I shall attempt to identify the changes in relations between producers and consumers that took place with the implementation of the new management model in Portuguese primary schools. This analysis will take into consideration the fact that family influence may assume a variety of forms: choice (or exit); voice (institutional participation and representation) and micropolitical activity (power, influence and "covert regulation").

Choice

In Portuguese schools, practices of parental choice date back to before the new management model (see Chapter 4). They were in evidence in middle and upper middle class schools, especially when located close to main trunk routes,

and potentially involving some "switch" between the public and private sectors[9].

The reform in school governance, by making compulsory the formation of groupings among the smaller schools, introduced a new facet into this process. Schools with pupils considered to be "difficult" were gradually shunned by their potential partners: Park School refused to be grouped with Ameixoeira School for reasons which included the social status of its pupils[10], while Magalhães School circumvented the risk of association with certain schools with a large gypsy population by promptly joining the Santa Maria grouping (Clara, president executive board, Magalhães School)

These processes of exclusion cannot entirely be attributed to the teachers' desire not to have socially disadvantaged pupils in their classes. They also derive from the conviction that many families evaluate (and stigmatise) schools more on sociological than on educational grounds:

> This school is a Castelos school (wealthy Lisbon suburb), but in reality it is nothing like a Castelos school. It became associated with the ethnic minorities from the clandestine shantytowns in the area, and that was enough to turn many parents away. They prefer to send their children to Pessoa School. Even when Pessoa School is full and they have to register them here, they get them transferred at the first opportunity. And remember that the main ethnic minority here are Indian children, who are very quiet, well-behaved and applied to their studies (Joana, PEB, Gama School).

Ironically, the results of the external evaluation of Gama and Pessoa Schools were very similar, despite the marked demographic difference between them. This fact did not prevent a rapid decline in pupil numbers at Gama School, while Pessoa School continued to be extremely popular. These data would suggest that parental choice of school, even when covertly exercised, as in

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[9] It was possible to identify differences in strategy between middle class families (and the different "social strata" composing them). It was not possible, however, fully to investigate these differences (see Ball & Vincent, 2001 for an analysis of this question in other contexts).

[10] Ameixoeira had an even more disadvantaged school population than Park School. Besides this, Ameixoeira made the additional "mistake" of putting a kindergarten teacher in charge of contacts related to the formation of the consortium

Portugal, will make things difficult for schools located in socially deprived areas (even when they offer a quality educational service).

Different Voices

The institutionalisation of mechanisms of "voice" in Portuguese schools, as favoured by the new management model, would not seem to have been enough to compensate for the risks of increased differentiation inherent in the new managerial concepts. On the contrary, it gave rise to new problems and new inequalities: lack of representation or political co-opting of less privileged families; non-existent channels of communication between representatives and represented in these schools; "participation by assimilation" (Friedberg, 1988). It should be stressed, however, that the differences in "voice" associated with the process of stratification can by no means be entirely ascribed to the limited participation of more disadvantaged families in the new management organs. Rather it constitutes a problem of a more global nature, taking manifold forms in the various schools, and contributing to the differentiation between them.

Excluded voices and "supporters"

The first phase of this research showed that there was, indeed, an intractable divide between schools and socially disadvantaged families. This situation remained largely unchanged following the transition to the new management model. Even in schools priding themselves on good relations with the families, collaboration was limited to the informative and the social: parents attended termly meetings, helped with parties and provided specially requested materials. Meanwhile, they hardly ever openly challenged the teachers' decisions: "The parents here don't normally raise problems. It's very seldom that you get one of those parents who just won't let things rest" (Clara, president executive board, Magalhães School).

It should be stressed, however, that even the schools that found themselves in the midst of "excluded voices" and "reluctant supporters" found it more difficult to ignore the pressures brought to bear by the new managerial concepts. Indeed, the fall in the birth rate, together with the social stigmatisation of schools with a higher number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (and ethnic minorities) placed these schools under the threat of closure or drastic "downsizing". This problem could only be tackled through a systematic public demonstration of the quality and the breadth of initiative of the school (as in the case of Magalhães School). In such cases, "giving in" to the new managerial concepts was virtually inevitable, especially in smaller schools with a greater and more immediate risk of closure.

"Hybrid Citizens"

If working class families rarely entered into "dialogue with the school"[11], frequently due to the conviction that they were not supposed to do so unless summoned by the teachers[12], the same cannot be said for the middle classes. The latter would often keep the school of their choice under close and comprehensive surveillance. In addition, they were not afraid to voice their disagreement on a variety of subjects. Even when they exhausted the possibilities of negotiation with the teacher or head, they did not give up without a fight. They submitted formal complaints in writing, either to the school or to the authorities. Through such protests, concern with preserving the image of the school or the teacher was gradually eroded (especially at Main School). The criticisms expressed in these petitions, newspapers articles and "letters to community" became increasingly more explicit:

> The parents' association used to talk to the more difficult parents and try to reassure them. Nowadays it pressurizes the parents to write to the Regional Department and air their grievances against the school (Antónia, president, board of Studies, Main School).

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[11] see also Vincent, 2001

[12] see also Dias, 1985; Davies *et al*, 1989

> The parents were furious because the school didn't open when they wanted it to. So, of course, they went straight to the new papers to kick up a fuss (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

At Pessoa School, albeit in a less intense and regular form, a similar process of criticism took place. In addition, the Pessoa School parents' association did away with a fixed budget for financial support to the school, replacing it with selective financing of projects that they considered of greater importance.

It was at Main School that the teachers' loss of autonomy was most evident and far-reaching. Even so, many of the parents still thought of the organisational restructuring carried out at this school as insufficient.

"New Consumers"

Much of the stress and strain suffered by teachers and managers in middle class schools was not so much the result of pressure exerted by the official representatives of the parents, who were sometimes partially assimilated by the representation process itself (Silva, 2001), but of pressure exerted by certain active minorities. At Main School, these minorities were mainly composed of parents who supported a definite convergence between the managerial practices of the school and those typifying the private sector:

> You [the head] must tell them [the teachers] what to do. It should be like it is in companies. If you're a good worker, you get support and incentives. If you're a bad worker, or don't want to work, you're out. It's as simple as that (meeting of a small group of parents and the head teacher, convened because of the problem of teacher substitutions, September 2000, Main School).

The same kind of pressures were brought to bear at some parents' meetings:

> The parents' association is presenting an extremely cursory activity report. We need to make a more thorough evaluation of the teachers and staff, and the quality of pupil interaction

> provided by the school. Everything should be quantified and written down: the number of absences and late arrivals of each teacher, the discipline problems encountered in each class, the number of times and the way in which the parents' association intervened in each particular case (father, parent's meeting, field notes, 21.6.2000, Main School).

Although in a minority, consumer parents were nonetheless extremely active in Main School micro-politics. They were also on the increase at this school:

> The attitude of "Newville" parents has changed a lot lately. There are more and more parents who think I should run this school like a company. They work in those big companies themselves, where everything is decided by money and dismissals, and they think that I should do the same. (Rita, president, executive board, Main school)

It should also be mentioned that the Main School parents' association, in spite of putting up a certain resistance to the more radical intentions of the "new consumers", eventually adopted many of the latter's ideas on relations with social partners. Contracts with service companies and cooperatives, originally made informally by word of mouth, became increasingly formalized and subject to periodical evaluation (LTA, food, cleaning, language centre). Former partners, e.g. the LTA "The Adventure" and the "Speakeasy" school of languages were replaced by others offering more competitive advantages and whose "loyalty" was guaranteed by temporary contracts that could be annually reviewed and rescinded (based on parent surveys and Parents' Association opinion). In this way, an unbridgeable gap was created between core professionals (permanent or semi-permanent teachers), semi-peripheral workers (contract teachers) and peripheral workers (LTA monitors, language and computer teachers, art and other support teachers). This differentiation between professionals, likewise noted in other countries, had serious consequences in terms of salary, status and job security. In addition, this signing of contracts with partners released the management of the parents' association from minor managerial duties and enabled them to concentrate their attention on defining and evaluating educational policies:

> There are parents' associations with colossal budgets that directly run leisure-time activities and the canteen. We chose to do things differently, using outside service companies. This year we managed to get these contracts signed, with renewal dependent on periodical reappraisal. This leaves us free for other types of intervention (Hermínio, parents' association, Main School)

It was thus more and more difficult to distinguish between (hybrid) citizens[13] and consumers in the school. Moreover, the micro-political activity engaged in by both sectors often became confused and mutually reinforcing.

Micro-Political Activity

Power is both implicit and explicit in relationships between parents and professionals (Todd & Higgins, 1998). Despite the fact that this statement has been obscured by current educational policies, the professionals are well aware of the differences in power and influence that characterize the various social groups.

> I have to pay careful attention to the community I'm dealing with. If these parents don't get their problems solved in the school, they'll go to any lengths . . . They pick up their mobile phones and phone all over the place: the papers, the Regional Department of Education, the state secretariat, the unions (Rita, president, executive board, Main School).

> Here the parents don't generally cause problems. They're very humble, well-mannered people. (Filipa, senior teacher, Gama School).

It was at Main School, as already mentioned, that the power struggle between parents and teachers was most frequent and acrimonious. Indeed, the sociological features of the neighbourhood, together with a great capacity for individual and group intervention, put the school under permanent pressure. In principle, not a single aspect of the running of the school was immune from controversy. Incidents were sparked off because of *logistical aspects* (the quality

[13] for a description of similar processes in England and France, see Ball *et al*, 1995; Vincent, 2001; Van Zanten, 1996

the food, lunch- and break-time supervision, hygiene and school security); *rricular issues* (syllabus progress rates, importance given to "academic" areas, ope and organisation of special programmes); *pedagogic matters* (teaching ethods, discipline problems in classes, differences in ways of arranging the ndergarten rooms); *pupil relationships* (conflicts between pupils, rowdiness at aytime); *extracurricular activities* (setting and checking of homework, pupils' bs at parties); *teachers' conduct* (absences, lateness, ways of "regulating" the ıildren); *class composition* (in primary school and in the transition to :eparatory school).

ıis type of relationship with the school highlights the complexity of the :ocess whereby certain sectors of the "new middle class", in this case a ;gment with high educational qualifications and considerable social and ɔlitical capital, attempt to reconcile their choice of state school with high :ademic ambitions for their children.

ıe dynamics behind school/family relations at Main School (and to a lesser :gree at Pessoa School) also show that those Portuguese middle classes with a :rtain "cultural capital", no longer rely on the traditional processes of social production - based on family dynamics and home tutoring - to guarantee the lucational and professional future of their offspring. They therefore adopt a ɔrofessional model" very close to that identified in other countries: careful hool choice, close surveillance of teachers' work and educational activities, ıd constant monitoring of the progress of their children (see Gewirtz, 2001, ın Zanten, 1996, 2002).

mong the strategies most widely adopted by the Portuguese middle classes in e preservation of their social standing, stress should also be placed on their ırallel choice of state and private education. In primary teaching, this mbining of state and private schools means a richer school curriculum rough LTAs and the various firms that provide "educational services" for

children (English, computer technology, music, sports). Indeed a double curriculum was being provided in middle class schools.

In these circumstances, it would seem inadvisable to count on predominantly administrative measures, like SBM or school evaluation, for the effective implementation of any policy of equality of educational opportunity.

It should also be stressed that upper middle class parents negotiated very carefully the inviolability of their class frontiers. An example of this was the complex negotiation through which they managed to thwart the central administration's attempts to balance the sociological composition of Newville schools (to which Main school belongs):

> Jorge (parent) - Last year the Regional Department of Education reclassified the school down there [known as "Africa School", because of its ethnic population], allowing it an intake of second- and third-cycle pupils. In this way pupils from Main School at the end of Key Stage 2 would be distributed between Africa School and Paloma School (the most upmarket middle school in the area). They wanted to find bureaucratic solutions to political problems [mixing pupils from Main School with poor pupils from the Franciscano neighbourhood]. These are integration policies which, as we already know, don't work. On top of that, the school that was reclassified is in a very run-down state (...) We were lucky enough to get hold of that information in time to act. It's not that we're a Mafia, but we do have contacts at practically every level of the system. So both parents' associations [Main and Paloma Schools] headed straight for the Regional Department of Education to have things out. We had to stand up for our rights. Of course, we came in for direct or veiled accusations of chauvinism and xenophobia, and the whole business was difficult and long-drawn-out. Some meetings took the whole day, with practically no time for lunch. But they couldn't get the better of us. At the third or fourth meeting we put our cards on the table: "either you play fair with us, and we continue negotiating round the table, or we'll look for other means - and you can be sure that we'll be successful". They knew that we weren't going to let the matter rest, that we'd go to court, to the press, whatever it took. But it was a very complicated negotiation. Some of the meetings were attended by all the top brass: the regional director, the two assistant heads, the centre of the educational area. But we reached agreement: Paloma School would "stretch" itself to take all our pupils and the Regional Department of Education

> would try to find a solution for the Franciscano pupils, especially for the seventh year and for the older pupils. So it all worked out in the end.
> I. - Did it really work out? Didn't the Franciscano pupils end up going to the run-down school, where there were already a lot of repeating students?
> Jorge - But those are the limits of our system. You can only integrate in small numbers. Whether we like it or not, we have to be practical.
> I. -But in that way, will it ever be possible to achieve integration in this country? Middle and upper class pupils would have to far outweigh the others ....
> Jorge - What I mean is this. I can't bring up my child properly, even with regard to the problems of integration, if those in need of integration disrupt the system. And that's what would have happened if the solution had been otherwise. Everyone knows about the schooling of pupils from the Franciscano neighbourhood and about their attitude towards the school itself.

This episode also clearly demonstrates the ability of Main School parents to put pressure on the central administration. If these parents got their way with these higher authorities, they would get it far more easily with primary schools (traditionally small and of lowly status). In fact there is no lack of evidence to this effect:

> This year the teachers refused to help with the organisation of classes at Paloma School [pupils transferring from one school to the other]. Last year there were tremendous problems and the parents all rounded on us. That's why this year nobody wanted to be involved. The one who eventually took on the job was a mother, who is also a teacher at Paloma School and who knows both sides of the problem (Rita, predident of executive board, Main School).

Conclusions

The way in which the "producers" and even the local and central administrative agents respond to the more powerful "consumers", on matters for which the former are strictly responsible, confirms the risks of deepening inequalities which various authors have associated with "devolution" policies

(Slee *et al*, 1998; Whitty *et al*, 1988; Ball, 2002; Derouet, 2002). It also shows how the process of "producer capture" can go way beyond the framework of responsibilities stipulated in the legislation. Even in countries where, in whatever form, a centralist matrix persists, many middle class parents "get what they want" (see Van Zanten, 1996, 2002). This possibility is confirmed by the thorough organisational overhaul that took place at Main School, and which in innumerable areas transcended the legislative directives. This by no means suggests that educational policies and directives are meaningless. In all the schools observed, there were professional and organisational changes in line with the new management model: work intensification (number of meetings, diversification of managerial duties); less autonomy for teachers in the use of non-contact hours, lesson planning and curricular management (files, minutes of meetings, year and class projects); the emergence of a new social structure, associated with the performance of new managerial duties and with the degree of "initiative" shown; difficulty in turning a blind eye to the "demands" of the market (constitution of school consortiums, management of school image and personal career); an increase in internal and external pressures to redefine teachers' professional identity and pedagogic practices according to neo - Fordist patterns.

This study shows, however, that the impact of the new policies varies considerably and depends heavily on the context of the school (social status of the families, location) and, to a lesser degree, on the organisational characteristics of the school itself (size, history of the institution, leadership "profile", number of senior teachers, and the organisational ability of the detractors).

In general terms, the transformative effects did bring about the realization of neo-Fordist concepts in the organisational structure of middle class schools and in the cultural and professional reorientation taking place therein. These processes, although facilitated by the directives contained in the new management model (project and school culture, differentiation between the

roles of school manager and teacher, formalization of school evaluation), only took place because of the heavy pressure brought to bear by middle class families. In this way new kinds of differentiation were created among Portuguese primary schools - in the pedagogic and organisational domains - which "compound" the process of differentiation that took place in the final phase of democratic school management (services, extracurricular activities, participation in "innovative" educational programmes).

While there are certain political directives that could help to attenuate this differentiation[14], there are nonetheless prevailing aspects which would seem to suggest exacerbation: legislation on curricular differentiation in basic education, publication of league tables in the press; competition between schools for the financing of projects and special activities (laboratories, arts); the appearance of forms of selective financing for schools (Alfa project, the role of local authorities in supporting certain projects and activities). Within this policy paradigm, middle class schools can count on the strong determination of the parents to preserve, and if possible increase, the competitive advantages available to them in the sphere of education.

> Without pressure, we don't get anywhere [reference to the setting up of the local kindergarten]. We'd like to enter into dialogue with the authorities on a friendly basis, but it's just not possible. We have to go in with our claws out, spoiling for a fight. We have to speak to the councillor, the Mayor, even to the President [of the Republic] if necessary. At parents' meetings we always say: "If there's anyone with useful contacts, please speak up". In institutional terms [formal intervention], we'll always do whatever seems most opportune and suitable at the time. But we'll also have no hesitation in exercising other forms of influence (Jorge, member of the parents' association management).

What this research suggests is that the emphasis on neutral and rational "improvements" in "quality" and "efficiency", when given by professional and

[14] namely the further academic training of teachers, which might lessen their vulnerability to parents with higher educational qualifications

political advocates of the managerialist reforms, serves to obscure the opportunities for the advancement of middle class interests offered by these same reforms. In this way, the reforms may be interpreted, in part at least, as having their origins and purpose in the interests of particular class groups.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS

The period under analysis (1998-2002) corresponds to a time of major upheaval in the bureau-professional matrix, which dominated the running of Portuguese primary schools throughout almost the entire twentieth century. It also represents a process of non-linear convergence with the neo-managerialist and neo-liberal perspectives which, since the mid-eighties, have been at the forefront of the political strategies of various developed countries.

The process of change, identified in this research, began to make itself felt with the educational reform of 1986, a political venture carried out in the name of educational democratisation, but in which there were also visible signs of support for a mild form of the neo-managerial concepts: the generation of a certain air of crisis surrounding state education; the ascribing of problems in the system to bureau-professional structures (teacher "corporatism", administrative centralization); support of increased "freedom of education" and the assigning to school organizations of a major role in the processes of innovation and change. This then was the beginning of a new management cycle in Portugal, what I shall call the *"third edition of the democratic management"* of Portuguese schools, the organisational and professional consequences of which I have described in Part II of this research. This *third edition of the democratic management* of schools represented the *beginning* of the end of the traditional policy paradigm of educational centralisation in Portugal. This change in paradigm, though initially slow to get under way (1986-1998), was to gather momentum at the turn of the century with the institutionalisation of the new model of school management (1998), which represented an important landmark in the process of diffusion and consolidation of neo -managerial concepts in Portugal.

The *"Third Edition of the Democratic Management"* of Schools: Criticism of the Bureaucratic Matrix and Reorientation Towards "Educational Modernisation" (1986-1998)

Lima (1992) points to the existence of two distinct editions of the "democratic management" of schools in Portugal: a first edition, corresponding to the brief self-management experiment that accompanied the democratic transition (1974-1976), and a second edition, coming in the wake of the period of "normalisation" that followed the April revolution, which was characterized by a marked return to the traditional paradigm of political and administrative centralization of education (see chapter 1).

The present study would suggest that there is also a third version of the democratic management of schools, which began in the mid-eighties and was to develop, by fits and starts, into the definition of a new SBM model (1998). During this period there emerged a political discourse in line with the neo-liberal and neo-managerial perspectives prevailing in the closing decades of the twentieth century. There was increasing criticism of the Keynesian models for development and of the ways in which the public sector was organised ("less state, better state"). While this did not lead to a significant overhaul of the Portuguese public administration, the new political discourse nonetheless had extensive social repercussions:

- it legitimised the (re)privatization [1] of some of the more modern sectors of the Portuguese entrepreneurial network (Banking, telecommunications);
- it heralded a period of increased valorisation of organisational and administrative functions (Formosinho & Ferreira, 1998);
- it opened the way for the advocacy of (neo-)liberal models, which hitherto had garnered little support in Portugal, in a variety of business sectors.

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[1] Many of them were nationalized during the Revolution (1974-1976)

In the educational domain, key indications of this *volte-face* were: the political debate that accompanied the educational reform (1986), with emphasis on the role of schools in the process of innovation and change (Dias, 1999); the change in the public's attitude towards state schools (França, 1993; Afonso, 1997; Dias, 2002); the attempt to reform school governance through the publication of Decree-Law Nº 172/91 (Afonso, 1997; Estevão, 1995) and the support given to the spread of private education (especially higher education). With regard to institutional practices, which is the prime objective of this study, mention should be made of the Administration's attempts, without relinquishing power, to transform the schools into the "*nerve centres*" of educational co-ordination and innovation, to redefine the status of school managers and to extend parental participation in the making of decisions.

The (Re) Discovery of the School

Portuguese schools have traditionally been seen as "local services of the State" (Formosinho, 1989) and, as such, as the repository of instrumental decisions (ways and means) rather than of expressive decisions (goals of the organisation). The concept of 'school community' was restricted to those who came under the disciplinary jurisdiction of the State - teachers, general staff, pupils - and excluded both the "clients" (parents) and local bodies and associations. As peripheral services, schools had no real internal management: they were controlled from the outside, by the central services and "regional" departments, through normative dispatches, circulars and other legislation (Formosinho *et al*, 2000; Lima, 1999, 2001). Educational "crises", generally concurrent with major political upheavals, were handled by resorting to instruments of macro planning (the Republican, Salazarist, and "Marcelist" educational reforms and the "democratic" reform of '86).

However, the development and complexity of the system, together with international trends in the field of labour organisation, began to set the scene for the emergence of new patterns of educational regulation. Thus the central

administration itself, after harshly criticizing the bureaucracy and uniformity of the system, took it upon itself to "modernize" it: that is, the "decentralisation" of certain services alongside the introduction of mechanisms for the micro-regulation of schools (educational projects, plans of activities, standardised assessment). This process enabled the State to "achieve greater efficacy in terms of control and co-ordination, be in more direct contact with educational establishments and encroach upon their territories" (Lima, 1998, p19). Thus, there is a "paradox": a shift from a centralised system with local latitude to a system with local latitude which provides for pervasive central control. In a word, unobtrusively and without noticeable loss of power, Portuguese educational administration was beginning to realign itself with the paradigm of the "educating state".

In the case of primary and secondary schools, the approximation to neo-managerialist concepts essentially took the form of a revalorization of the organisational dimensions of schools (school culture, "extended" collegiality) and the increasing use of new management instruments, including whole-school planning and the carrying out of "projects". The third edition of democratic school management would therefore seem, to a great extent, to be an attempt to modify forms of labour organisation reminiscent of the entrepreneurial innovations of the eighties in the commercial sector (company projects, quality circles, corporate culture).

This attempt would appear, however, in the period spanning 1986 to 1998, to have been largely unsuccessful or half -hearted. Indeed, the first phase of this research, conducted at the end of this management cycle (1998), shows that, at least in primary education, the teachers remained to a great extent on the sidelines of the new management orientations. Their professional identity, with its distinct bureau-professional stamp, was focused on the children and the ethic of public service. Their professional careers and status were clearly predictable and based on given "objectives-indicators" (years of service in the profession, type of contract, years of service in the school). Their *sense of belonging* was determined by the profession (teaching) and by the level of

education (primary), with the specific workplace a very secondary consideration. The actual concept of the *school* was restricted to the traditional "environmental" factors (size, location, and pupils' social background) and had little to do with the importance attached by the new managerial perspectives to organisational aspects (school culture, transformational leadership, collegiality and new professionalism). The "collective" and the "organisation" were essentially perceived as a collection of autonomous pedagogic practices. Coordination was restricted to peripheral activities such as parties, study visits and excursions. The political regulation practised, particularly by senior teachers, was effectively more concerned with preserving the autonomy and diversity of each individual teacher's practices than with guaranteeing effective institutional coordination.

What is more, such instances of cooperation as were identified in this study had little to do with the neo-managerialist concepts of management:

- they consisted essentially of *pair-work* of a spontaneous, voluntary and non-formalized kind, in which personal affinities played a major role.
- the extent of peer collaboration was largely considered to be a matter of personal choice (support, exchange, joint work);
- joint decisions could be freely modified, deferred or even reversed according to the "dialogue with the situation" (Huberman, 1993).

These findings would suggest that the institutionalisation of mechanisms of "contrived collegiality" [2] established in the late eighties in Portugal, had little effect on the pedagogic practices of the majority of teachers. The influence of the new management concepts, among primary teachers, did not go beyond a generalized acceptance of the principles of teamwork. This acceptance, however, had more to do with models for "collaboration cultures" (Hargreaves, A., 1998) than with the principles of the "new professionalism" (Hargreaves, D., 1994). The segmentation of educational activity has continued to be the norm in the schools under analysis. The practices of Portuguese teachers, while

[2] school plan, school regulations

confirming the preponderance of practices of restricted collegiality in countries with a history of centralisation, are far from constituting an exception (Nóvoa, 1998).

There was, however, considerable pressure, both internal and external, brought to bear on teachers to redefine their identity according to parameters more in line with neo-managerialism (see Chapter 4). In models of "good practice", organisational investment began to outweigh pedagogic considerations. Pressure to (re)discover the school did not come only from the central administration. School directors and (upper) middle class parents played an essential role in the process of change.

The Redefinition of the Duties of School Managers

The strong tradition of political and administrative centralisation that was a feature of the initial development of the Portuguese education system allowed little scope for the emergence of strong local leaderships. The political co-opting of school directors during the Salazar period did not significantly alter this situation: the power with which directors were invested exempted neither them nor the schools in their charge from conforming strictly to directives from above.

The anti-authoritarian climate, which came in the wake of the 1974 Revolution, could easily have led to the development of local "transformational leaderships". However, after the brief self-management experiment, this climate would seem to have crystallised into a certain ideal of "collective" school management (Clímaco & Rau, 1988). The position of school heads could thus be described as "teacher among teachers". Their fellow teachers elected them for a short period, after which they returned to their old post if not re-elected. Their duties were limited, especially in primary schools, where secretaries were non-existent, to humdrum tasks of organisational co-ordination or everyday administration: setting dates for meetings, filling in "charts" (statistics),

enrolling pupils, managing subsidies, recording absences, organising correspondence and disseminating administrative directives.

The "low profile" of Portuguese managers began to change, however, in the mid-eighties, as neo-managerial discourses and directives took hold in Portuguese education. Among the most visible signs of this change were the accumulation and diversification of the duties of school heads, which were the combined result of three main factors:

- increased administrative demands imposed by the State upon the schools (drafting of school projects, school regulations, surveys, "references");
- contracting out of logistic support services and extra-curricular activities, with schools increasingly targeted by commercial and service enterprises;
- establishment of a new style of relations with the families and the development of "local" partnerships.

The new duties performed by school heads made them particularly aware of the new neo-managerial doctrines and brought about: more regular contact with the central administration, families and companies; gradual removal of teaching hours; greater exposure to training and information sessions about the reform process; and major local responsibility for the implementation of the new education policies. It should be mentioned, however, that the marked receptiveness of school managers to the new managerial doctrines, as revealed in this study, was not only due to political and organisational factors (increasing status and role differentiation in relation to colleagues). Indeed, the confluence of various decentralising agendas in Portugal, during the period under analysis, made it difficult, outside specialist circles, to establish a clear distinction between the different agendas (see Barroso, 1999). In fact, the Portuguese political discourse, like the one adopted in France, was not characterized by explicit support of market principles (though this has now changed). The language used was more euphemistic, based on appeals to modernisation, participation, assessment and quality (see Deroeut & Dutercq

1997; Barroso, 1999; Dias, 1999; Deroeut, 1999, 2000; Van Zanten, 2002). As result school managers were fairly easily "captured by the discourse" (Bowe *et al*, 1994).

The considerable cultural convergence detected in this study among Portuguese school heads [3] did not prevent them from doing very different jobs according to the size and catchment areas of their schools. Indeed, during the third edition of democratic school management, the modernisation of Portuguese primary schools depended to a considerable extent on the organisational ability and influence of the families. This was to have undeniable repercussions, as we shall now see, on all major aspects of the redefinition of the head teacher's role: espousal of the new political orientations, the setting-up of support infra-structures and the development of partnerships with families, companies and the community.

The Middle Classes and the Selective Modernisation of Primary Education

The declaration of the rights of Portuguese families to participate in the running of primary schools was, due to a combination of political and administrative factors, an extremely long-drawn-out process. Even after the democratic transition, the sanctioning of the right to form parents' associations was to take ten years (1984), while it would be two decades before parent representation on school boards was institutionalised (Silva, 1993, p253). Most schools remained, however, on the sidelines when it came to the new political directives: difficulties were experienced on a number of occasions in the forming of parents' associations, and family participation on the school board was the exception rather than the rule [4].

Thus relations between schools and families were, during this *third edition of democratic management,* still characterized by a marked separation which, in the

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[3] Including those directors who took part in the second phase of the current research (the only exception being the director of Avenue School, in the first part of the study)

[4] even where it existed, it was limited to matters of a logistic or extra-curricular nature and from the authoritarian political options underpinning the universalization of primary education in Portugal (dictatorship).

case of the more disadvantaged social groups, veered towards distinct marginalization (see also Davies *et al*, 1989; Silva, 2001).

These trends did not prevent middle-class families from making important advances in the process of challenging "producer capture": for example controlling the school agenda by exerting pressure on certain issues; influencing syllabus progress rates and the choice of teaching methodologies; enforcing the putting in place of particular activities and projects; circumventing the rules governing the entrance age of pupils or class changes; exercising the right to choose the teachers (especially the power of veto on teachers considered unsuitable and of "preference" in relation to teachers on the permanent staff).

Furthermore, either through available legal instruments or facility addresses, many middle-class parents were extremely exacting over their choice of school for their children. This choice led to a preference for state schools with features similar to those of private schools: "selected" school population, good academic reputation, wide variety of services on offer (canteen, ATL, special educational programmes).

While these issues are of importance, it must be said that they only represented part of the influence exerted by middle-class families on the selective restructuring of Portuguese primary schools. This influence made itself felt, in a very particular way, in the large number of extra-curricular activities contracted out by parents' associations: information technology, English, music, swimming, dance, martial arts, etc. These activities made up for the shortcomings of the school curriculum, traditionally very deficient in certain areas, while also contributing in a decisive way towards its modernisation (especially in key areas of the "new economy" such as foreign languages or information technology).

This complementary curriculum, for the most part contracted out to companies specializing in services for children, also became an important early factor in the process of blurring the frontiers between the public and private sectors in primary education: the exacting of financial returns for the freeing of premises and "customers"; the contacting out of services; the need for management to be

constantly available to smooth relations with partners and to sort out problems arising from the cohabitation within the school of different entities, companies and services.

The minimalist nature of the support given to primary education (inseparable from the peculiarities of the Welfare State in Southern Europe) also paved the way for private enterprise to penetrate this level of education. Indeed, due to the general dearth of infrastructures in state schools - canteen, supervision, cleaning - many parents' associations contracted companies specializing in the provision of these services. Parents' associations also lent the schools financial support, thus enabling them to be more innovative in their pedagogic practices (study visits, projects) and to acquire most of the materials and equipment necessary to the smooth running of the schools (photocopiers, materials subject to wear and tear). Thus, to a great extent, the parents took charge of a variety of social responsibilities which formally belonged to the Portuguese State.

However, middle-class schools were the only ones that benefited from this state of affairs. Even when there were dynamic parents' associations in deprived areas (Park School), they failed to enlist sufficient support to make the new services viable (e.g. the 'Brinca' project at Park School). Furthermore, the commercial companies did not display the same interest in "rich" and "poor" schools, which meant that offers of services, patronage and financial incentives were unequally distributed.

This phase in the opening up of the school to the community thus turned out, on balance, to be an important element of increased differentiation in Portuguese primary education. This was evident in the sociological composition of the school population, in the importance given to programmes and projects of an innovative curricular nature, in the educational support infrastructures and in the type of extra-curricular activities available to pupils from different social groups. However, not all aspects of the running of primary schools were affected in the same way by the change process. Teachers' pedagogic practices and professional cultures would seem to have been less receptive to pressures for "modernisation" than the management structures, the logistic support

services and the "peripheral" curricular activities (projects and leisure-time occupations).

The sanctioning of school autonomy (1998) will go some way, however, to strengthening the process of destabilization of the bureau-professional cultures that were a feature of this *third edition of the democratic management* of schools. It will also contribute, as we shall now see, towards the institutionalisation of structures, rituals and organisational practices more in line with the prevailing neo-managerialist concepts.

The Early Years of "School Autonomy" in Portugal (1999-2002)

School autonomy has been such a powerful political concept in recent decades that some authors have compared it to the "Promised Land", the land *par excellence* of "milk and honey" which, once attained, will offer a life of peace and plenty for ever and ever (Lima & Afonso, 1995). In the case of the Portuguese education system, reaching the Promised Land meant freedom from the chronic shortage of resources, from the uniformity of the system and from the severe administrative constraints that stifled primary and secondary education. However, the prerequisites for access to the various phases of autonomy in Portugal made it perfectly clear, paradoxically, that the new system brought no slackening of the central regulation of educational activity (see Dias, 1999; Barroso, 1999).

Neo-managerialist and (re)Centralising Pressures: The Role of Central Administration and School Managers in the Process of Change.

The autonomy enjoyed by Portuguese teachers and managers in the final quarter of the twentieth century was, to a great extent, a "private" issue. Indeed, non-compliance with the law, whether deliberate or the result of unfamiliarity with the legislation, rarely went beyond the walls of the school or the confines of the classroom. Such limitations did not, however, prevent the feeling of

autonomy from being a reality for many primary teachers. Critiques of the old management model were therefore restricted to financial matters and to "minor" day-to-day problems ("bureaucracy", delays with repairs, etc). Similar perspectives have, moreover, been recorded in other countries where the bureaucratic school system allowed, paradoxically, considerable room for teacher autonomy (Broadfoot *et al*, 1988; Lauder *et al*, 1999). To distinguish between "locus" and "strength of control" (Broadfoot, 1985) is particularly important to understand the Portuguese educational system before the sanctioning of the new model of "school autonomy": the April Revolution in Portugal weakened the mechanisms of central control (inspection, national exams); schools heads became "teachers among teachers"; regulation among peers was, also, virtually non-existent.

What we see then is that the move towards formal school autonomy was a central state initiative on the basis of a proposal drafted by specialists in School Administration, and was not the result of any important social or pedagogic movement (Afonso, 1998).

Moreover, the approved model, in blatant contrast with its announced objectives, left the schools with little power to decide their own formal organisation. This applied nationwide and to all levels of education (except higher education). Local actors were only given "freedom" to introduce minor changes in the organisational sphere: number of Assembly members, whether the Board was collegiate or run by the Director (Afonso, 1999).

Teachers once again found themselves relegated to the position of implementing policies which had been defined elsewhere. Lack of familiarity with the new language of management, together with the whirlwind nature of the change, were also powerful factors that encouraged people to cling to their dependence on the administration [5]. This being the case, documents required

[5] Schools constantly resorted to the "model" documents provided by the said administration ("school projects", regulations), the support and consultancy services (legal departments, RAAG forum), the current legislation (for defining objectives and the school "mission"), and the prevailing political discourse itself (which inspired a large proportion of the "themes" and "school projects")

for the autonomy process were drawn up in strict compliance with the current legislation and "examples" made available by the Administration (see Derouet, 2000 for a similar report on the French case). The tight scheduling of the process did nothing to alter this mindset or to encourage teachers to espouse the change process [6].

It should be stressed, meanwhile, that during the implementation of the new management model the central administration was not content with its traditional roles (regulation, prescription). It also took on new roles through its regional offices (guidance, counselling, incentive), which were highly valued by the local agents most involved in the process: "Without the Regional Department we should never have managed it. It was they who encouraged us and were always ready to explain things. They were marvellous" (Rita, executive board, Main School; see also Barroso, 2001).

Taken together, these policies initiatives suggest that the Portuguese State, though in the process of changing paradigm (from "educating state" to "regulating state") [7], did not renounce its hyper-prescriptive tradition. The hybrid nature of devolution policies has also been noted in other countries (Arnott & Raab, 2000; Whitty, 2002).

In any case, due to the atypical nature of Portuguese bureaucracy and the way in which the autonomy process was "handled", the early years of the new model of school management did more to increase the formalization and predictability of organisational practices in Portuguese schools, than to disseminate alternative forms of local organisation.

The new model of school management also served to legitimise the reintroduction, in terms of quality and accountability, of political control mechanisms weakened by the Revolution (inspection, national exam system). Portuguese primary teachers were thus forced to abdicate from the main "April conquests" regarding their professional autonomy, even before the autonomy

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[6] The movement towards (re)centralisation was further strengthened through the publication of additional legislation that tightly regulated the new organisational dynamics (i.e, conditions for the accumulation of responsibilities and the granting of reductions in contact hours)

[7] new processes of internal and external evaluation were institutionalised at the same period (inspection, national examinations, activities reports).

contracts had begun to be defined. This loss of autonomy was further exacerbated by the change in relations within the schools themselves, especially by the transformation of school executives from "teachers among teachers" to "middle managers". Indeed, if Portuguese primary teachers remained largely on the fringes of the change in school management, the same cannot be said for school executives, who played a pivotal role in the process.

The support of school executives for the new management model can be assessed in different ways: by the high percentage of heads who applied for the new management posts, by the way in which they influenced the composition of the school assemblies and pedagogic boards (especially the choice of presidents, which was largely the result of personal and ideological co-option), by the systematic putting down of any resistance to the new model, and by the pivotal role they played in the cultural legitimisation of neo-managerial perspectives [8].

It should, however, be made clear that, contrary to what the neo-managerial concepts would have us believe, the role played by school executives in the change process can hardly be attributed to the prompting of a specific personal or organisational "vision". Indeed, the professional and organisational perspectives of the managers taking part in this study revealed ways of thinking and acting redolent of prevailing neo-managerial concepts. We are therefore a long way from the traditional charismatic leaderships (Weber, 1949; Smyth *et al*, 1989) and even further from genuine democratic leadership [9] (Blase & Anderson, 1995; Apple, 2002).

In fact, this study would suggest that there is a gradual transformation of Portuguese school executives into "middle managers", with clear standards of

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[8] Indeed, they resisted for months on end their colleagues' attempts to restore the old order, suffered humiliation and the loss of their peers' respect (Main School and Gama School) and were on occasions forced to renounce the new posts for lack of internal support (as was the case with Pessoa School, Santa Maria and even Gama School, after the period of observation.) Despite all this, they continued, with steadfast conviction, to stand up for the new government orientations.

[9] These leadership "styles" are characterised not by the reproduction of existing power relations as is the case in point, but by the capacity for empowerment and social transformation

loyalty to the central administration and with action strategies that, on occasion, evoke the concept of "bastard leadership" [10].

The long tradition of political dependence in Portuguese primary education may go some way towards explaining why Portuguese school managers act mainly as internal representatives of the "State" ("middle managers"), rather than leaders of a local school community. Besides this, as has already been pointed out by various authors, school executives are progressively cut off from the pedagogic universe itself:

> I now feel like one of those people I used to criticize - those people who sit in offices, who know nothing about what is going on in the classrooms, but who are always telling teachers what to do and what not to do. Now I'm only in touch with pedagogic issues through training sessions or problems I have to deal with as and when they come up (Rita, president executive board, Main school).

It should also be remembered that school managers, in primary education, are among the main beneficiaries as well as agents of the transition to the new model (the benefits were noticeable under the headings of political legitimisation, exemption from contact hours, salary, social status and administrative support).

For all these reasons, Portuguese school managers have, as a result of a process which began over a decade ago, been increasingly distanced from their former colleagues (ideologically, socially, operationally and strategically). They have ceased to be "teachers among teachers". Rather, they have begun to exert considerable pressure to involve the teachers in their *own* concerns and pressures. The concept of the "good teacher", in particular, now depends on the degree of organisational involvement (measured by participation in non-teaching activities), on commitment to the "good image" of the school and on the entrepreneurialism shown (securing of funds, partners, programmes).

This concept of the "good teacher", which began to take shape during the previous analytical phase, constitutes, as we shall now see, only one facet of the

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[10] a concept developed by Nigel Wright

professional and organisational restructuring process that followed in the wake of the new managerial concepts.

Neo-Fordism in Primary School: The Emergence of New Patterns of Work, Power and Identity

"Collaboration under Constraint"

Neo-Fordist regimes make for working environments which differ considerably from traditional forms of organisation: smaller, more manageable units within the whole; extended duties and responsibilities; new mechanisms of control and "quality" assurance; imperative nature of identity and organisational involvement; (see Brown & Lauder, 1997; Menter *et al*, 1997; Woods & Jeffrey, 2001). Professional identity becomes "at once more constrained (in terms of support and opportunities) and more extended in terms of responsibilities" (Menter *at al*, 1997, 10).

The influence of the new forms of labour organisation in the restructuring of Portuguese primary schools could be seen in the following: development of several forms of middle and cross-section management; constitution of "year departments" and flexible project teams ("the smaller units"); new forms of work control (minutes of meetings, lesson-plan files, work-rules to be observed by the various bodies); new mechanisms for evaluating the quality of the work (standardised tests, surveys, activity reports); contracting out of the relations with school partners; "strategic planning" (school project, curricular project, year project, classroom projects) [11].

These elements also indicate that the implementation of the new SBM model clearly contributed to the development of new patterns of professional relations among primary teachers. This process was, however, far from being smooth and straightforward. In some cases teachers managed to take advantage of the new managerial conditions to promote something akin to traditional processes

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[11] the schools varied slightly in the type of practices adopted

of co-operation (mutual support, exchange, emergent forms of "joint action"). There were also situations, though very few and far between, in which forms of collegiality were used as a defensive measure, to divert pressure from upper middle class families (as in the case of Main School).

On the other hand, in all schools concessions were made which brought relations between Portuguese primary teachers more in line with the paradigms of "collaboration under constraint" that have been associated with neo-managerial reforms (see Woods *et al*, 1997; Smyth *et al*, 2000). Indeed, on the pretext of inspection, legislation, or the (good) "organisation of the school", less formal styles of collaboration were criticised and replaced by structures and practices with a higher potential for institutional control and "contrived collegiality" (regular meetings; minutes; year projects; group lesson-planning; reports).

In these circumstances, it comes as no surprise that teachers' reactions to the new forms of collegiality were, for the most part, ambivalent.

Expressions of satisfaction with the new conditions for "exchange" between colleagues were mingled with criticism of the formal, compulsory nature of these same conditions (fixed times for meetings, minutes, reports) and of the fact that many decisions came ready-made from above, leaving no room for any real dialogue and no choice but to comply with what had been stipulated. Although the overall reaction was positive, as in other countries (Osborn *et al*, 2000), there were, nevertheless, situations in which criticism outweighed acceptance of the new *modus operandi:*

- in schools with strong political tensions and leadership styles considered to be authoritarian (Gama School);
- in cases where there was not enough convergence of pedagogic and administrative perspectives (some year co-ordinations and work groups in almost all the schools);
- when professional collaboration was hampered by material constraints (for example, the existence of different textbooks in the Santa Maria Consortium; lack of financial support for school projects).

In these circumstances it becomes clear that this study corroborates the theses of Woods *et al* (1997), concerning collegiate practices in primary education:

> While primary teachers may welcome a workplace culture of collaboration if the range and quality of the collaboration and collegiality are considered appropriate, they will see it as contrived collegiality if it appears to involve intensification, overload, ineffectiveness, limited choice, inappropriate democratic procedures, the domination of an informal discourse and extended institutionalisation (p47).

Teachers' Professional Identities and School Hierarchies

The research revealed that primary teachers were not indifferent to the new professional perspectives that went with the definition of the new management model. Although still a long way from the transition from a "service ethic" to a "market ethic", there is no doubt that most teachers were aware of the dilemmas, and in many cases the tensions and constraints, produced by the clash between the old obligations and the new (children's needs and moral accountability versus organisation and client demands). Adaptation to the new work conditions seems to have been more a process of accumulating and incorporating obligations and loyalties (making time for projects, giving consideration to the preferences and pressures of parents, taking part in non-teaching activities) than of an in-depth redefinition of professional identity.

There are, however, factors which may intensify this process of redefinition of identity. Indeed, new social hierarchies are emerging in Portuguese primary schools which are not entirely unconnected with the degree of compliance, espousal and success observed in the acquittal of the new management duties. Traditional hierarchies, established on the basis of professional status and length of service in the school and in the profession, have begun to lose ground to the demands of the "new professionalism" imposed by the new organisational directives and attendant political discourse. This discourse has also enabled school managers to eradicate the influence of the more antagonistic teachers and to use political co-option in the "conferring" of

middle-management responsibilities (as well as in the actual make-up of the school's managerial bodies). The traditional divisions that existed between contract and permanent teachers no longer make sense in a universe increasingly typified by the performance of organisational duties[12] and by demonstrations of a spirit of initiative.

Moreover, even outside primary schools, professional career perspectives are ever more tightly dependent on the new management concepts and functions. The number of duties performed and projects co-ordinated are, for instance, crucial factors in applications for certain courses (specialisation or MA). On the other hand, quality of teaching is of little relevance in these processes. Thus, dedication to the children and the classroom brings few social advantages. Indeed, it is the courses mentioned above that make for career advancement and widen the network of relations and of professional opportunities open to primary teachers.

SBM and Parental Participation in Schools

The dominant literature implies a socially undifferentiated voice on parental involvement in schools (Hanafin & Lynch, 2002). However, this study confirms the thesis of those authors who have emphasised how current social and economic conditions underpin a re-worked but also re-emphasised agenda of class differentiation in education (Whitty *et al*, 1998; Lauder *et al, 1999;* Gewirtz, 2001; *Reay, 2001;* Silva, 2001; Ball, 2003). The research also clearly suggests that, at least in Portuguese primary schools, different kinds of parents have very different voices. These differences manifested themselves in a variety of ways. In this conclusion I will discuss two of the main problems:

- the existence of deep social divides in the institutional participation of parents, as laid down in the new management model (Chapter 5);
- the powerful influence exerted by upper middle class families on Portuguese primary schools and on the administrative structure itself.

[12] Presidency of managerial bodies, advisory services, project co-ordination, year co-ordinations

With regard to institutional participation, emphasis must be given, in the first place, to the priority given to parental participation in those areas which lend themselves to a certain degree of "producer capture" (school assembly, board of studies, parent-teacher meetings) as opposed to participation in organs in which there is tighter hierarchical and cultural control on the part of the State: executive committees, regional education offices, educational area centres (see also Silva, 2001). The very institutionalisation of SBM models, by generating institutional isolation, has been seen as a means whereby the State can obstruct the voicing of certain actors' interests: teachers and teachers' unions, the interests of socially disadvantaged families (see Whitty, 1996; Whitty *et al*, 1998; Stoer & Cortesão, 1999; Smyth, 2000).

Secondly, by favouring forms of institutional participation in which socially deprived families feel uncertain of themselves (Dias, 1985; Davies *et al*, 1989), the assumption that these families take little interest in their children's education is reinforced. This is reflected in the difficulties attendant on the formation of parents' associations in schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils; the lack of nomination of representatives or their high rate of absenteeism (in the Santa Maria consortium). If this was taken at face value we would, once again, be guilty of "blaming the victim" (Davies *et al*, 1989) for a situation in which the school performs a role of "covert regulation" by privileging models of parental participation typical of the middle classes (Donzelet, 1986; Silva, 2001).

It should also be stressed that the institutionalisation of parental participation, as shown by this study, can also play other roles in the "segregation" of socially disadvantaged families. Indeed, the political co-opting of the more "organised and interested parents" as representatives of socially disadvantaged groups[13] only helps to disguise the issue of the cultural diversity of families. Moreover, the flimsy structure of parental participation in these schools may also contribute to the cultural assimilation of certain families and to a definition of parent roles in accordance with established interests: fund-raising, pressure on

[13] Gama School, executive board

the local authorities to carry out repairs and construction work, checking up on the school support services (canteen, LTA). Other more difficult issues are systematically neglected.

To admit the existence of forms of cultural assimilation does not mean, contrary to what certain contemporary political proposals presuppose, that working class families easily slip into the role of "professional parent" which characterises certain strata of the modern middle classes[14]. Indeed, it is the cultural capital of these social strata that, to a great extent, enables them "to 'decode' school systems and organisations, to discriminate between schools in terms of policies and practices, to engage with and question (and challenge if necessary) teachers and school managers, to critically evaluate teachers' responses and collect, scan and interpret various sources of information" (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995, p25).

It is clear that the new SBM model has not significantly changed the pattern of school/family relations existing in schools catering to predominantly disadvantaged social groups (see Chapter 5). On the other hand, the parents of pupils at Main School anticipated aspects of the reform in school governance to exhibit many of the features of the "professional parent" model already being sanctioned in many developed countries (see Gewirtz, 1999, Vincent, 2001; Van Zanten, 2002). They operated as "active consumers in the market place", they adopted a "policing role, keeping a close eye on what the school was doing and taking action when needed" and they "acted as home educators", supporting children in learning and school activities (Gewirtz, 2001, p381).

In addition, they displayed a remarkable ability to exploit the school system to the best advantage of their children (Gewirtz, 2001). Indeed, the "achievements" of "parent power" over a ten-year period are striking: the construction of a new school and Kindergarten; a full programme of leisure-time activities; school support services (canteen, cleaning, security); improvements to the school's infrastructures (painting, modernisation of the toilet amenities, gardening, a

covered play area); prompt substitution of teachers (in cases of absence, late appointment or "unsuitability"); a strong academic curriculum with some curricular innovations and the "right" of preference concerning certain members of the staff (permanent teachers).

Above all, these parents succeeded in making "sociological and psychological paradises" of the schools or classes attended by their offspring (only a minimum number of deprived, disruptive and special needs children gained access to these schools).

The existence of "parents that get what they want" (Birenbaum - Carmeli, 1999) from state education has also been noted in other countries:

> As for primary schools, a recent sociological study conducted in the affluent districts of Paris shows that, when these parents do not choose the private sector either for convenience or for ideological reasons, they act in such a way as to "privatise" the public schools where they are both numerically and socially in a dominant position: they use their political and social relations to better physical facilities, obtain educational materials of the highest quality and increase the number of outside activities (Van Zanten, 1996, p69).

The publication of the new management model (1998) gave fresh impetus to the process of (selective) "privatisation" of Portuguese primary schools. In fact, the differentiation between schools that during the third edition of democratic management was largely limited to management and extra-curricular activities today significantly affects the very organisational and pedagogic processes of the schools (see Chapters 5 & 6). Indeed, the penetration of neo-managerialist concepts and neo-Fordist-inspired forms of labour organisation are more significant in middle class schools (Main and Pessoa Schools) than those attended by working class or deprived children (Magalhães and Gama Schools). In some cases, upper middle class pressure and influence was so strong that the process went far beyond the provisions of the legislation: total reorganisation of the school premises at Main School ("small units"); redefinition of parents' and

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[14] nor that directives for this of "cultural assimilation" are politically appropriate in pluralist and democratic societies

executives' functions, through delegation or contracting out of minor management duties, to concentrate on "political tasks" (school priorities, evaluation of services); increasing formalisation and "surveillance" of relations with social partners (the renewal of "contracts" became subject to annual evaluation); strategic control of the local circuits of schooling (parents); pressure for common goals between the different services and organisations operating in the schools (Kindergarten, LTA, support services); strong advocacy of new forms of work organisation (projects, teams).

The periods under analysis correspond to processes of approximation, both on the formal level and the level of practices, to the neo-managerialist education policies that have emerged in a number of countries in recent decades. In the first phase of this study, the approximation of these policies was felt mainly in peripheral educational functions (such as school administration, support services and LTA); but the impact of the new regime of school autonomy (1998) led to an important organisational, cultural and political transformation of Portuguese primary schools. Moreover, in both phases, transformations effected in some schools went far beyond the legal requirements, suggesting that we are confronted with processes of societal convergence, albeit of a non-linear kind, which transcend the specific political directives of the different countries. It is not only "sign policies" that move between frontiers (see Chapter 1). Further research is necessary, however, particularly of a comparative nature, to determine the specificity of the various national and geo-strategic matrices.
This study suggests that the Portuguese model of convergence with neo-liberal and neo-managerial policies has certain distinct peculiarities: the erratic way in which the process has been conducted (constantly being halted and restarted); the strong "discretionary power" still held by the central administration; the radical (and rapid) change in head teachers' roles; the vulnerability of state structures (local, regional and central) to upper middle class pressure and influence; the weakness of the democratic and inclusive tradition in Portuguese public education and Welfare.

We should not forget, however, that there is a world of difference between emphasing the local, the contingent and ignoring any structural relationship among practices (Apple, 1996).

In a similar way, it is one thing is to recognize the specific attributes of each particular country and quite another to negate the existence of influences and constraints operating on a transnational scale (economic, political and cultural).

> Educational reform tends to be seen in terms of getting educational aims and objectives right - ignoring the wider political dimensions of change. Focusing on the mechanics of school management means that system - wide issues, let alone the international dimensions of educational restructuring, are often lost from view (Whitty *et al*, 1998, p5).

Thus, this thesis attempts to avoid overestimating the degree of policy convergence in education while also seeking to avoid any underestimation.

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APPENDIX

RESPONSABILITIES OF THE ORGANS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
(Decree-Law 115-A/98 of 4th May)

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES